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The Nation.

April 6, 1985 $1.25; U.K. 65p

EDITORIAL

THE RISING AT LANGA

It was South Africa week in America, and America week in South Africa. ABC's *Nightline* moved en masse to Johannesburg and brought the horrors of apartheid into American living rooms. But the visit had its domestic repercussions. When South African p[illegible]ssacred a score of marchers near Lan[illegible] officials were forced to sharpen their [illegible]ily gentle criticism of the white regime [illegible]nd unacceptable" is how Secretary of S[illegible]ultz put it.

President Reagan was much less annoyed. Alone among world leaders, he agrees with the political line and the racial fictions promoted by the Afrikaner extremists. Not even the Botha government would justify the Langa massacre by maintaining that there were blacks among the police, or that it was provoked by "elements" that "want trouble in the street." In other off-the-wall remarks last week, Reagan dismissed the Holocaust as a forgotten episode involving people long gone. To be consistent, he might have agreed with Hitler that because Jewish Communists provoked the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, the crackdown was justifiable.

It was a savage irony that South African President Botha's "reformist" government chose the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre to open fire on the Langa marchers. In both cases unarmed blacks were gunned down by a regime whose ability to rule is based on its willingness to kill. But this time the black majority will not retreat into sullen submission. Even as people were dying in Langa, guerrillas of the African National Congress clashed with the army in the eastern Transvaal. Earlier, the industrial city of Uitenhage was paralyzed by a general strike of black workers.

Sharpeville signaled the end of nonviolent protest; the events of last week may signal the beginning of liberation war.

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Andrew Kopkind

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UNDER CIVILIAN RULE

BRAZIL'S AMBIVALENT FUTURE

JOSEPH A. PAGE

"Brazil is the land of the future, and the future never comes." That popular maxim illustrates not only the Brazilians' habit of poking fun at themselves but also a sad truth which has long frustrated them. Unlike its rival, Argentina, which remains mesmerized by its past, Brazil has always looked ahead toward a horizon that seems perpetually beyond reach.

The recent restoration of civilian rule—clouded by the illness of President-elect Tancredo Neves—provides an occasion for speculating on what lies ahead for South America's largest nation. Should it fail to make the transition to democracy, the struggle against dictatorship on the continent would receive a severe setback. Contemporary Brazil offers two contrasting visions of tomorrow—one a golden dream, the other a nightmare—that are in an increasingly uneasy state of coexistence. The tensions between them have greatly influenced recent events and have meant the chronic postponement of Brazil's shining future.

One cannot help but be optimistic when exposed to the bustle of great cities like São Paulo and Belo Horizonte; the imagination reflected in Itaipú, planned to be the world's largest hydroelectric dam, and in other energy-producing projects, like the conversion of alcohol derived from sugar cane into fuel; and the pioneering impulse behind the settlement of Brazil's far-flung frontiers. The so-called economic miracle of the early 1970s brought about an impressive expansion of the nation's manufacturing infrastructure. The level of development attained in the south central region far exceeds that in any

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LETTERS.

STRUGGLE IN ARGENTINA

Philadelphia

I was pleased to see Penny Lernoux's February 2 article, "The Threats to Argentine Democracy"; however, I must take issue with its sensationalist tone. To state that the "repression" in Argentina today differs from that of the dictatorship in that it is "more selective" shows both ignorance of the brutality of the dictatorship and a lack of familiarity with the current struggles in Argentina.

To begin with, 1984 was the first year in sixteen that there was not a single political assassination in Argentina, a fact that would be difficult to discern from the article. Argentina now has an unfettered press, free elections, a functioning legislature and judiciary, and a breadth of political and cultural debate that would rival any country's. Whatever its shortcomings, the government of Argentina has taken some affirmative steps against the military: forcing much of the upper crust of the armed forces to resign, initiating prosecutions of many leading military officials and forming a national commission on the disappeared, headed by the author Ernesto Sabato. Nowhere does Lernoux mention that for the first time, former junta members sit in prison awaiting trial for human rights violations. Nor does she give proper attention to the unprecedented Sabato commission report, which has been published and names more than a hundred officers implicated in the repression.

The article is riddled with errors. The coup in 1976 was the *fifth* military displacement of a civilian government since 1930, not the third, as Lernoux reports. The Astiz case is not before the same military court that previously ruled in his favor but is before the Supreme Council of the military which, although resigning en masse and expressing its support of the purported "battle against subversion," has not refused to accept testimony from the families of the disappeared. Against the priest who gave the FAMUS sermon inciting a coup, the government brought criminal charges under a newly enacted law for the stabilization of democracy. To say that the current military—which overthrew Perón in 1955 and prevented his political participation for the next two decades—was "nurtured on Perón's fascism" is simply preposterous.

Having spent five months in Argentina working with those trying to promote the prosecutions of the military, I share many of their criticisms of the Alfonsín government. I agree that the government did not take advantage of its mandate in the October 1983 elections to conduct a thorough purge of the military and swiftly bring those responsible for the crimes of the "dirty war" to justice. The decision to route the criminal prosecutions of the armed forces through the military tribunals *initially* proved a grievous political mistake and allowed the armed forces to partially regroup in defense of the former junta members.

Nevertheless, glib references to Nuremberg aside, the difficulty of the Argentine undertaking must not be overlooked. Argentina is attempting the unknown: to judge itself for crimes committed under the aegis of state authority while living under the constant threat of renewed military activity. . . .

Finally, I must take issue with the statement that "only a small band of human rights activists opposed the Argentine dictatorship." It does a disservice to the increasing numbers mobilized at the end of the dictatorship, particularly during the strike wave of 1982, which prompted the military to invade the Falklands as a last-ditch measure to thwart discontent. *Samuel Issacharoff*

The writer was a representative of the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights in Argentina in 1984.

LERNOUX REPLIES

Bogotá, Colombia

In his rush to defend Alfonsín's government, Issacharoff appears not to have read my article thoroughly. For example, he claims that I did not mention that former junta members were on trial, when, in fact, the article devoted an entire paragraph to the question.

Having lived four years in Argentina and having been present in 1976 at the height of the terror, I am not ignorant of the military's brutality. As to "familiarity with the current struggles in Argentina," I suggest he talk to politicians, workers and human rights groups, including lawyers trying to prosecute cases against the military. They gave me a much less sanguine view of the situation than Issacharoff paints.

He conveniently ignores my distinction between the mass arrests that led to some 30,000 disappearances under the dictatorship and the selective repression that has been going on under the Alfonsín government. Although it is true that there were no political assassinations last year, I see no reason to be congratulatory, since military critics and human rights activists continue to be bombed, raped and tortured.

I also question his claim that the government has forced the resignation of "much of the upper crust of the armed forces," because, with the exception of the junta members, the "crust" is still there. He says that the government has initiated prosecutions against "many" leading military officials; I do not think that nine cases merit that description. (Private individuals have begun hundreds of cases, but they have little hope of success without government intervention.) As to the Sabato commission, I discussed it in a lengthy paragraph on the National Commission on the Disappeared, its official name. For the record, the government did not publish the commission's report but deliberately withheld it, and it now appears that few, if any, names will be officially revealed. The report named 1,351 people—not "more than a hundred," as Issacharoff says—and was leaked to the press by dissident members of the commission, who objected to the government's decision to keep the findings secret.

Now for Issacharoff's charge that I have made errors of fact. I wrote, "The armed forces have thrown out three elected governments since the 1930s," counting Perón, 1955; Frondizi, 1962; Illia, 1966. (Ramón Castillo, who became Vice President in the fraudulent election of 1937, was later delegated presidential powers and governed under a state of siege until the military took over in 1943. Isabel Perón's government, overthrown in 1976, could technically be considered a fourth, although her husband, who died during his mandate, was the elected President.) As to the Astiz case, it has been returned to a military court, and though the judges are different, their military philosophy is not. No judge has accepted the numerous testimonies against Astiz as evidence of his wrongdoing. Representatives of the Center of Legal and Social Studies, which has privately initiated some 500 cases against military officials, say they have encountered similar difficulties in trying to enter evidence from the families of the disappeared, because the military courts claim the relatives are "potential security risks."

Although it is true that the government brought charges against the priest who delivered the FAMUS sermon, not one of the 1,500 military officials who shouted coup threats at the mass was reprimanded, much less arrested. Regarding Perón and fascism, any reading of the period will show that the armed forces were deeply imbued with a Creole version of fascism and strongly supported Perón's embrace of the Axis powers during World War II. Perón's break with the military was due to other causes, including his betrayal of the upper classes.

I agree that the task of establishing justice in Argentina is daunting, but that is precisely why the human rights groups see a parallel with Nuremberg, where a few were judged in the name of many.

Finally, Issacharoff's observation that "increasing numbers mobilized at the end of the dictatorship" is true of most such regimes, which experience growing resistance as they approach their deathbed. But to cite such late opposition is, in my opinion, a disservice to the human rights groups that risked torture and death to protest the carnage in the 1970s, when all others, including the Roman Catholic Church, the labor movement and the political parties, were too cowed to do anything. *Penny Lernoux*

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EDITORIALS.

Turkish Visitor

This week, visiting Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal will be wined and dined by President Reagan to celebrate the ties between Turkey's "democratic" government and the United States. Just before Ozal's arrival, an incident cut out to raise doubts about Turkish democracy in American minds was quietly reported in the U.S. media. On March 23, Arthur Miller and Harold Pinter, who had completed a fact-finding mission on human rights in Turkey for the International PEN Club, held a press conference in Istanbul. No accounts of the event appeared in the Turkish press; all stories were banned by the martial-law authorities.

The gist of the playwrights' censored message was that Turkey's human rights record is abysmal and that the tightly restricted election held there in 1983 hardly loosened the military junta's grip. Unofficial estimates put the number of political prisoners, some of them facing death sentences, between 10,000 and 20,000. Kurds and Turks continue to be killed in clashes with security forces. Members of banned

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trade unions, political parties and organizations, among them the Turkish Peace Association, are subjected to interminable mass trials. In the jails, prisoners are routinely tortured.

Ozal has come to the United States in search of political respectability as well as guns and money. Unlike most of Turkey's European allies, America has stood firmly by the generals throughout their reign. Now, more than ever, they need its support. Their Band-Aid solution to the political crisis of the 1970s is beginning to come unstuck. Most of the artificial parties created to play out the 1983 election are facing internal difficulties; Ozal's own Motherland Party is falling under the domination of its neofascist wing. The economy is in serious trouble: the inflation rate has climbed above 50 percent, and foreign debt is expected to reach $70 billion by 1989.

Fortunately for Ozal, his main interests and President Reagan's coincide. What the United States wants from Istanbul is iron stability and military might. Turkey is within easy striking distance of Iran, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, and stands between the Soviet Union and the oil fields of the Middle East. It bristles with bases and surveillance facilities that are available to NATO and U.S. forces. Judging from past performance, Ozal has little reason to fear that reports of human rights abuses, even from eminent literary figures, will significantly diminish his aid package for 1986. A few hundred dead or a few thousand tortured weigh nothing against the Administration's geopolitical designs.

Help for Haitians

Of all the horrors visited on poor black, Hispanic or Asian refugees seeking shelter in the United States, none are as egregious, gratuitous and well-documented as those inflicted on the survivors of Haitian tyranny. Denied the comfort—cold enough, it's true—given immigrants from countries where U.S.-backed regimes have been overthrown, the Haitians must enter the United States illegally, often arriving, at great peril, in small boats on the Florida coast, where they are treated as pariahs by immigration officials. Many Haitians are sent to desolate detention camps in the barren quarter of Texas or along the frigid Canadian border in upstate New York. There they find no interpreters, no lawyers, no friends.

Congress has taken little interest in the Haitians' plight, other than sounding a routine alarm when a boatload of refugees is seized, or capsizes. But a coalition of human rights activists, church leaders and civil libertarians is trying to obtain relief for the Haitians through legislation, and lawyers for several refugees have gone to the Supreme Court to get fair treatment for detainees from the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Their case, *Marie Lucie Jean v. Alan Nelson*, does not make the claim that the government cannot exclude the Haitians or subject them to normal screening and detention procedures. It demands that the treatment be nondiscriminatory and that illegal aliens who happen to be black Haitians be treated no worse than those who happen to be white Europeans, Nicaraguan merchants or anti-Castro Cubans. An appellate court ruled against the lawyers' argument, but the Supreme Court heard the case last week and a decision is expected this spring.

The Reagan Administration claims that the Haitian boat people are economic migrants rather than political refugees—thus they are not eligible for admission—and that Jean-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier's dictatorship does not qualify as an opponent of U.S. foreign policy. Like Salvadorans driven north by the death squads, the Haitians who put to sea get no asylum from immigration officials. The border cops claim that the aliens are merely fleeing poverty, which has no standing at the customs gate. Legal redress may help some of the refugees in the short run, but political support is what's needed. Without a change in immigration law, a redefinition of immigrants' rights and a recognition that the United States has a responsibility to help those who suffer as a result of its foreign policies, there will be more shipwrecks and seizures of the tired and poor on these shores.

The Changelings

The convert plays a favored part in social history and ideological drama. Armed with the certainty of revelation, the authority of confession and the conviction of sin, the convert leaps ahead of those poor souls who have had the misfortune, or bad sense, to keep a foolish consistency. From all accounts, St. Augustine was a pretty fair pagan—coveting this and that, and generally indulging his paganistic vices with relish and determination. But he really came into his own after the prayers of his mother, Monica, converted him to Catholicism (for her efforts she was sainted as well; the benefits of conversion are not strained). Thousands of patient monks and anxious abbots who had hoped to place in the heavenly sweepstakes were left in the dust by the born-again Bishop of Hippo.

David Horowitz and Peter Collier, former editors of *Ramparts* and more recently authors of best-selling books on the Rockefellers and the Kennedys, may have less world-historical impact than the Catholic converts of antiquity, but their embrace of Reaganism has given them enormous cachet in this intellectually chaotic season. They have been in the process of spiritual transformation for some time. Their well-researched biographies of America's dynastic families are stuffed with scandal, high on inside dope and devoid of serious analysis, from any perspective, of the kind Horowitz, at least, constructed so eloquently in the 1960s. (His *Empire and Revolution* and *The Free World Colossus*, which documented the disastrous dynamic of American imperialism, were pioneering revisionist works.) Of late, the two have turned up in mass-circulation magazines, with rambling, vicious ad hominem attacks on former comrades, allies and

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friends from the antiwar and black power movements. One article defined the difficult association of white and black radicals as a problem of interracial lust and class guilt, with names named for easy identification. Another rewrote the history of the final years of Students for a Democratic Society as an orgy of drugs and pansexuality, complete with an illustration of Bernardine Dohrn's bare breasts.

The message of the books and the articles, beyond simple sensationalism, is that society is irrelevant, that historical forces are inoperative and that only ego, id and libido—especially libido—are useful categories to describe and understand "an imperfect world." The rich man's quest for power, the adolescent's lust for pleasure, the white woman's guilt about her skin color, the black man's rage to dominate: such is the stuff of history, so why grapple with difficult abstractions like class, race, revolution, empire and ideology, which cannot be illustrated with anatomical detail?

Horowitz and Collier's latest broadside is an article published last month in *The Washington Post Magazine*. It's called "Lefties for Reagan," and it takes the cake. "Casting our ballots for Ronald Reagan," they write, "was indeed a way of finally saying goodbye to all that—to the self-aggrandizing romance with corrupt Third Worldism; to the casual indulgence of Soviet totalitarianism; to the hypocritical and self-dramatizing anti-Americanism which is the New Left's bequest to mainstream politics."

Why a vote for Reagan was specifically an antidote to those psychological and existential horrors ("self" is the authors' favorite prefix) is never made clear. They admit, in a parenthetical phrase in the penultimate paragraph of the seven-page article, that they are less than enthusiastic about the President's "domestic policy," but there's no time for that now. They are very upset about Soviet policy in Afghanistan, about the brutality of certain Third World governments (only a few leftish ones are mentioned; nothing about Chile, South Korea, the Philippines, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Sudan, South Africa, etc., etc.), about Abbie Hoffman, Tom Hayden (in his old days), Fidel Castro, "the Beverly Hills cocktail circuit," Noam Chomsky, the Khmer Rouge, *The Nation* and me.

This magazine comes under attack for an editorial which argued that the United States bears some responsibility for events in Cambodia and could contribute to a solution to the troubles there. I am criticized for a column I wrote for *The Village Voice* in 1980 which credited the Soviet Union with supporting (albeit inadequately) popular insurgencies and revolutions in dozens of places around the world where the United States supported (much more generously) the ruling dictatorships, juntas, oligarchies and tyrants.

Nevertheless, one would think that a vote for Mondale would have been just as legitimate an affirmation of the electoral process, a protest against selfism in all its ghastly forms, an expression of anticommunism and pro-Americanism, and a symbolic whack at Abbie, Noam and me. But only a Reagan vote is a ticket to heaven, a true confession of error and a credential for a place at the head of the line. Converts to Reaganism must be more radical in their convictions than ordinary adherents of the ideology; the born-again are less mannered in their behavior than are those to the manner born. Conversion hysteria, after all, is not a character disorder, like "self-hatred," "self-aggrandizing romance," "casual indulgence" and the other psychological and sexual aberrations Horowitz and Collier diagnose in the American left. It has specific social and historical functions, and it is a way for a political culture to create ideological momentum and legitimacy.

Horowitz and Collier rationalize their transit from red to dead as an aspect of maturity: "Anyone under 40 who isn't a socialist has no heart; anyone over 40 who is a socialist has no brain." I don't suppose they're thinking of Mussolini or Chiang Kai-shek; perhaps Susan Sontag and Arturo Cruz, both of whom are mentioned favorably, are more palatable models. The left has had its share of changelings, and it is certainly every polemicist's prerogative to go back on his or her word. But we should understand that reality does not change with each passing birthday, and that confessions made under the duress of history can easily fail the test of time.

ANDREW KOPKIND

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Dear *Nation* reader:

Recently, we wrote to you asking you to become a Nation Associate. The Associates are friends of the magazine who have banded together to support *The Nation* through difficult financial times. In the past two years, annual contributions from Nation Associates have been the primary reason we have held our ground against the steadily increasing cost of publishing a journal of opinion.

But the struggle to maintain *The Nation*'s financial independence never seems to end. Just last month, for example, we received notice from a gleeful Postal Service that our annual mailing costs would increase by $75,000.

The Nation Associates perform a crucial role in sustaining *The Nation* as an independent and critical voice. I hope that those of you who are not yet members of the Associates will consider joining this spring. Membership begins at $15 a year; some have generously contributed $50, some $100 or more. The Associates program has become one of *The Nation*'s lifelines. *The Nation* depends on it, and we hope that many of you will be able to respond.

With appreciation,

Hamilton Fish 3rd

AN IMPORTANT INVITATION TO NATION ASSOCIATES SEE PAGE 403

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

In the Middle of the Road

We're not a radical rag.

—Nation *direct-mail solicitation*

Why not? Maybe *The Nation* would do a lot better if it was a radical rag. Maybe the *Nation* people who dreamed up that line should ask themselves why the words "radical" and "rag" are married in their minds. Maybe the people who run *The Nation* should take another look at the advertisement that has been running on the back of this magazine for the past few weeks.

Up at the top it says, "The Nation Institute and the University of Southern California School of Journalism invite you to attend a conference on The Journal of Critical Opinion." Then the text explains:

> Our idea is to bring together editors, publishers and staff of dozens of journals to discuss the theory and practice of putting out these publications. . . . We believe that these journals contribute in countless ways to the nation's political culture. They keep the mainstream media honest, put new issues on the national agenda and challenge operating assumptions. They are open to experiments in politics and culture. . . . They are the ultimate advertisement for the First Amendment.

Among the magazines participating are *National Review*, *The American Spectator*, *The New Republic*, *The New Criterion* and *Transaction, Social Science and Modern Society*. I'm glad the rights of these horrible journals are guaranteed under the First Amendment, but I don't think "they keep the mainstream media honest." To the contrary, these are exactly the magazines that have helped corrupt the mass media and instruct them in the art of telling lies. These magazines have not widened debate, they have narrowed it to leather-lunged condoning of reaction, both in politics and culture.

Victor Navasky and Hamilton Fish would rather ask you for $150 to come listen to the editors of *National Review*, *The American Spectator* et al., than be thought of as raggedy radicals. Readers of *The Nation* may not be too surprised. In the last issue there was an article by Nancy Nusser, identified as "a freelance journalist living in Managua." The article contained no new information and was mostly a dogged repetition of prevailing clichés. It could have appeared in *Time* or in any of the swath of conservative publications stretching westward across the country from the offices of *The New York Times Magazine*.

"The government's austerity program," Nusser wrote, "considered by foreign observers to be a step toward more pragmatic policies, was prompted by looming economic collapse." *Which* foreign observers? *What* pragmatic policies? Those are the words and sentiments normally associated with news reports of another attack by the I.M.F. on the living standards of Third World nations.

Later, in her discussion of the "hard-line approach the Sandinistas took after the revolution" (they "spoke of the necessity for eventually 'crushing' the enemies of the revolution"), Nusser writes:

> Now, confronted by the disastrous results of some of their dogmatic policies, the Sandinistas appear to have modified their ideology in terms of concrete policies, while retaining their rhetoric. Pressure from the United States . . . contributed to this loosening up.

This is exactly the language of the U.S. Embassy in Managua. It is also exactly how Reagan is attempting to excuse U.S. funding of the *contra* murderers. Why does it run in *The Nation*, when it is not true or even novel? I think it runs because in the minds of *The Nation*'s editors there is a profound fear of being caught out on a limb supporting the Nicaraguan revolution and an equivalent desire to sit under a tree in Southern California discussing "the journal of critical opinion" with William Rusher, Emmett Tyrrell and Hilton Kramer. There is no luxury so absolute as that of a liberal manicuring his political résumé, and taking daily elocution lessons against the time he can cry, I told you so.

I should say more at this point, but I can't, because Victor Navasky —as so often happens with editors who smack their chests in self-congratulation at the untrammeled free speech permitted in their pages—forced me to remove some material and furthermore insisted that I not even disclose what this material concerned until two weeks hence, when it will be of considerably less interest.

Nusser's performance is part of a trend gathering force among those who probably like to think of themselves as unragged radicals. Take, for example, George Black of NACLA, who joined the chorus of those providing unrequested and unrealistic advice to the Nicaraguan leaders, who have shown their utter lack of political realism by seizing power from one of the world's longest-lived dictatorships and by outmaneuvering a century's worth of American diplomacy.

On the very eve of the Nicaraguan election, Black, offered space on the *New York Times* Op-Ed page presumably to balance the interventionist rantings of a Republican senator, chose instead to chide the Sandinistas for paying insufficient attention to the demands of Arturo Cruz and his U.S. protectors. All that was needed to hold off the interventionists, Black claimed, was continual concessions by the Nicaraguans. Give them an inch, or several miles, and they will be satisfied.

There is abundant evidence that this is nonsense. The Nicaraguans have repeatedly offered compromise during the Contadora process, the Manzanillo bilateral talks and on other occasions. The United States does not want to negotiate, so why do people like Nusser, Black and all the other essayists who feel the urge to denounce Sandinista dogmatism take it on themselves to counsel moderation to the Nicaraguans and the American left?

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Some say Black and others like him are martyrs to truth, scourged by the left for their brave speech. I say, rather, that they are spring-heeled self-seekers, taking good care to advertise to foreign policy centers, opinion-page editors and network producers that they are securely anchored in the harbor of received opinion and pragmatic outlook.

What these essayists don't understand is that the United States will never voluntarily tolerate the elimination of its allies in Central America and the Caribbean region. U.S. "security" in this area has been based for nearly a century on a string of corrupt local elites and leaders tied to the American system. One cannot transform the social structures of countries like Nicaragua and El Salvador without attacking the basis of U.S. power in the area. Promises not to give docking facilities to Soviet submarines are beside the point. What the United States wants is malleable, predictable allies, as in Guatemala and Honduras and Costa Rica.

The Sandinistas have refused this role. Those who advise Daniel Ortega to bargain away major portions of Nicaragua's social goals in return for being left alone by the United States are similar to those naïve individuals who, in the mid- to late 1930s, advised Czechoslovakia to meet the demands of the German minority in the Sudetenland to avoid a confrontation with Hitler. As with Hitler and the Czechs, the only thing that will appease the United States is the collective suicide of the Sandinistas.

Living and Dying

Just in time for the Oscars, *The New York Times* ran an enormous article in its Living section about new Los Angeles restaurants. This shows that *The Times* truly is a national paper, attaching as much importance to trends in sushi presentation in Beverly Hills as to the soaring mortality rate for black infants between the ages of 1 month and 12 months. Indeed in the Living section on that same day there was a story, at the bottom of the page, about those worrisome mortality rates. For the second time [see "Beat the Devil," March 9], Robert Pear brooded about the mysterious rise in black infant mortality (19.6 deaths per 1,000 live births, almost twice the rate for white infants) since Reagan started cutting social spending.

And for the second time Pear found the rise a complex affair which has most experts baffled (buzzwords in italic):

> *Some* career scientists in the Public Health Service *acknowledge* the *possibility* that cutbacks in Federal programs serving women and children *might have affected* infant mortality. *But* senior officials at the Department of Health and Human Services *generally* do not accept that there is any connection. One official said that smoking, drinking and drug abuse by pregnant women were more important factors than the budget changes.
>
> "The concern about infant mortality is bipartisan. . . ."

Well, of course, that makes it all right then. The concern being bipartisan, I mean. I for one have the utmost confidence in the views of Reagan officials that there is no connection between the denial of money to the poor mother of a newborn child and her need to consume drugs or drink. If you took away Punch Sulzberger's money and told him to bring up a baby in a Harlem slum, I'm quite sure he would not even take an extra cocktail before dinner.

Dying and Living

This capacity of *The New York Times* and all other serious newspapers to see both sides of the story, to balance the starvation of a black child against the success of a Los Angeles restaurant, is manifest every time one picks up the paper. Right there in *The Times* not so long ago was the headline "GUATEMALA KILLINGS RISE BUT OVERALL GAINS NOTED." Try explaining that to your child. Call up Punch Sulzberger and ask him to try.

The story began: "Political killings and human rights violations increased significantly in Guatemala last year, according to figures provided by the American Embassy here. Nonetheless, the embassy has cited an improving political climate in arguing that 'overall human rights conditions' have improved in Guatemala, an assessment that is shared by the leaders of most political parties here."

As I'm sure Punch Sulzberger would be swift to explain to your child, the fact that the Reagan Administration is trying to attune the public to cordial relations with a regime of butchers has nothing to do with either the headline or the views of embassy officials in Guatemala City.

The Value of a Free Press

With the sale of ABC to Capital Cities Communications, the largest non-gas-related takeover in the history of the world, attention focused on Warren Buffett, the Nebraska-based investor. Buffett was a major player in the deal and already owns hunks of media stock, including about 13 percent of the B shares of *The Washington Post*.

The New York Times Business section ran a flattering article about Buffett. This is not surprising. If reporters from the *Times* Business section were to put out a new edition of Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, they would call it *Deregulatory Innovation: Productivity in the British Textile Industry*. In Buffett's case the *Times* reporter sought the views of Carl Spielvogel, an executive in the advertising business. Spielvogel brought the purpose of the Fourth Estate and First Amendment into sharp focus: "Long ago Warren identified communications companies as the bridge between the manufacturer and the consumer." There you have it: the essence of our sacred mission.

As I've remarked before, I'm all for these media takeovers. The more the public sees the news business as a capitalist enterprise cognate to trading in hog bellies the better off we'll be. Demystify the mystifiers!

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UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

When Fred's fiftieth birthday came around, I decided to give him an American Polled Hereford Association T-shirt. They're awfully nice. It was a difficult decision. Finding Fred a birthday gift used to be a snap. Fred has always been a pretty good beer drinker, and he travels around the country a lot; at some point, his friends put those two facts together and decided that what he would want for his birthday was some obscure American beer. It was similar to what might be decided about a hard-to-please uncle who once expressed a mild interest in elephants and now knows that every birthday will bring more statues and drawings and models of elephants, an animal he long ago came to hate. The problem was not that Fred had come to hate beer. Fred's got a serious tolerance for beer. The problem was that regional American foodstuffs had become fashionable: it had got so that there no longer was such a thing as an obscure American beer. When trendy joints in SoHo—places that cater to the sort of people who spend a lot of time deciding what brand of sneakers to buy—started serving only, say, Rolling Rock and Genesee, it was obvious that you could no longer walk into Fred's birthday party with a six-pack of Grain Belt and expect to get a big hello.

Fred doesn't raise Polled Herefords—he doesn't really have the acreage for that sort of operation where he lives now, in Brooklyn—but, as I said, the American Polled Hereford Association T-shirt is awfully nice. It has an abstract cow on the front. You wouldn't think the Polled Hereford people would go for an abstract cow, but the Polled Hereford people can fool you. The writing above and below the abstract cow says POLLED HEREFORDS—AN AMERICAN IDEA SINCE 1901. That happens to be my favorite Polled Hereford motto. The Polled Hereford people have more than one. For instance, it says "The Trend Is To Polled Herefords" on the mechanical pencil, which has a tiny cow floating in liquid where most pencils have erasers. The sweatshirt says POLLED HEREFORDS—THE BIG, BOLD BREED, and so does the baseball cap. For a while, I thought about giving Fred both a Polled Hereford T-shirt and a Polled Hereford baseball cap—it's what I think the fashion people call an ensemble—but finally I announced to my wife: "I've decided that the T-shirt ought to do it. The American Polled Hereford Association T-shirts are awfully nice."

"What happened to the idea of giving him both the T-shirt and the baseball cap?" she asked.

"It wouldn't be right to give him an ensemble with clashing mottoes," I said. "Fred's an old friend, and I'd hate to see him embarrass himself."

"Are you sure you aren't just being selfish?"

"Selfish!" I said. "How can you use that word to someone who's handed over as much Grain Belt beer to Fred as I have? Also someone, I might just mention, who considered giving Fred an entire box of bourbon-filled chocolates from Kentucky *in addition to* the American Polled Hereford Association T-shirt."

I had received the chocolates as a gift myself. The person who gave them to me said that they were illegal in all but three states, presumably because of the bourbon. We are talking, in other words, about a product that the authorities take seriously.

"Why aren't you giving him the chocolates?" my wife asked.

"My mother told me that it's rude to give away a gift," I said. "Also, how are we to know if this is one of the legal states?"

"If you were a truly generous person, you'd give Fred a few pieces of that Cajun boudin you've got in the freezer," my wife said.

My boudin! Before going any further, I'd like to say a few things about the Cajun version of boudin. The first thing is that it's just about my favorite food; the second thing is that it's impossible to come by outside of South Louisiana; and the third thing is that I wasn't about to give so much as a tiny morsel of it to Fred. Our friend James had brought the boudin from New Iberia, Louisiana. I might just mention, considering the ugly insinuations I've been obligated to record here concerning my standards of generosity, that in appreciation I presented him with my last copy of *The Woman's Day Book of Gelatin Cookery*.

"What about what my mother said about giving away a gift?" I asked.

"After all the hinting you did to get that boudin, it was less a gift than a takeout order," she said.

I saw nothing untoward about giving a little encouragement. James, after all, had to do research throughout South Louisiana to make certain he was bringing the best boudin. His was an extraordinary effort—requiring, I suspect, the consumption of hundreds of pounds of boudin, not to mention the trouble involved in hauling the final selection all the way to New York in an ice chest approximately the size of a Honda Civic.

"After all the trouble James went to, I can't imagine that you'd want me to hand out that boudin to any slight acquaintance I happened to run into," I said.

"Slight acquaintance! You and Fred have been friends for at least twenty years."

"He's a hard person to know," I said. "Also, I'm giving him practically my only American Polled Hereford Association T-shirt as it is."

"It *is* your only American Polled Hereford Association T-shirt," she said. "I threw away the one with the rip and the permanent boudin stain."

I hadn't realized that. I love American Polled Hereford Association T-shirts. They're awfully nice. I walked straight to the refrigerator. "Do you know what Fred might like for his fiftieth, just for old time's sake?" I said as I started rummaging around in the back of the bottom shelf. "A six-pack of Grain Belt."

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ARTICLES.

WHY NOT TRY RADICALISM?

Old Ideas for New Socialists

SIDNEY LENS

The problem confronting participants in the Socialist Scholars Conference to be held April 4, 5 and 6 in New York City is explaining the left's impotence and coming up with cures for it. Perhaps America is still too prosperous to accept socialism, but it is certainly beset by enough internal troubles—joblessness, homelessness, hunger, the arms race, foreign policy debacles, bank failures and what have you—to make it receptive to old-fashioned socialist initiatives for full employment, a planned economy, social ownership of banks, labor solidarity and national health insurance.

Unfortunately the trend to the right in recent years, reinforced by the infantile anticommunism that has insinuated itself into American culture, has caused far too many socialists, and the vast majority of liberals, to seek "new ideas" lest they seem out of step with the times. Socialism needs new ideas, but the quest for them should not become a mania for rejecting old ones or an excuse for following the liberals in their headlong move to the right.

With those caveats in mind, let's consider a socialist approach to the problems of the American labor movement. The power of unions has steadily declined in the last twenty years. Only 18 percent of the work force is unionized, a little more than half what it was three decades ago. Real wages are either at a standstill or falling under a barrage of givebacks. To be sure, there are people in the trade union ranks who understand the reason for these setbacks—William Winpisinger, president of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; members of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union; some of the leaders of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—and there are many good ideas floating around, such as comparable worth, which would enable unions to serve their members more effectively. But labor's mainstream leadership is looking for an approach that is moderate and painless. The hierarchs of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. commissioned a team of college professors to come up with new ideas. One of their major recommendations, currently being considered, is a plan to establish auxiliary labor associations for workers not employed in an organized bargaining unit. For a small annual fee workers could join these associations, which would provide group discounts on consumer goods, health care and the like but would not engage in collective bargaining, call strikes or handle grievances. Presumably, the auxiliaries would serve as way stations to real unionism.

It's a clever idea, quite worthy of academia. But why not dust off some old ideas that have been largely abandoned—working-class wages for union officials, solidarity, civil disobedience? Maybe workers would have more faith in unions if their leaders reduced their salaries to, say, $15,000 or $20,000 a year, from the $100,000 to $200,000 and more that they get now, not to mention chauffeur-driven cars and fat expense accounts. And maybe the unions would be more effective if they respected one another's picket lines. During the Greyhound strike in 1983, a big national union gave a $50,000 contribution to the striking union but allowed its members to cross the picket lines daily. Similarly, unionists might refuse to handle copper from the struck Phelps Dodge mines. Yes, there are laws against secondary boycotts, but there were laws against blacks drinking from "whites only" water fountains in the South, and those were overturned by civil disobedience. Labor made its biggest gains in the 1930s by refusing to obey unjust laws, but nowadays the big unions are afraid of lawsuits that would jeopardize their big treasuries. Why don't American socialists suggest a revival of militant tactics and organize a successor to A.J. Muste's Conference for Progressive Labor Action to plan them?

Consider another sign of leftist timidity. The smokestack industries in America are dying, partly because the arms race and the overvalued dollar are making them uncompetitive with those in West Germany and Japan, partly because Federal tax laws often make it more attractive to close down a profitable steel mill (in Youngstown, Ohio, for instance) than to operate it. U.S. Steel finds it more expedient to buy out Marathon Oil for $5.7 billion than to modernize antiquated mills. Why don't American leftists initiate a campaign to "socialize" the steel industry, a drive to make it responsive to national needs?

Socialists should not ape the liberals and neoliberals, whose proposals are intended to appease the right rather than solve the problems people face. The stalwarts of the Democratic Party exemplify this trend. Ronald Reagan gave them a pasting during the 1984 campaign and slyly planted the idea that their patriotism was something less than 100 percent. Now Senator Gary Hart, in what may be an opening gambit for his 1988 Presidential campaign, proposes that all young people, male and female, be drafted for a period of national service—either in the military or in some civilian capacity. The assumption seems to be that young people owe the government something in return for the privilege of having been born in this country. Maybe so, but government also owes something to its youth.

It has an obligation to train them to become tomorrow's leaders, and to that end it should provide free higher education to all who want it, as many other countries do. That's an old idea, of course, and it would cost money. But wouldn't it be better to spend money on educating the

Sidney Lens's autobiography is titled Unrepentant Radical *(Beacon). He has written numerous books and articles and has been active in movements of workers and the unemployed for almost a half-century.*

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young than on "proving" their patriotism by drafting them?

The useful programs that liberals spurn for fear of being tainted with the label "socialist" would fill a small encyclopedia. Unemployment stands at more than 7 percent. A few decades ago a figure that high would have been considered a sign the country was in a recession; today it means good times. If workers who have stopped looking and those with part-time jobs are included, the unemployment rate is about half of what it was during the Great Depression. How are we going to get these people back to work? Why not enforce the 1946 Full Employment Act and provide a job for all who want one? If that is socialism, we need more of it.

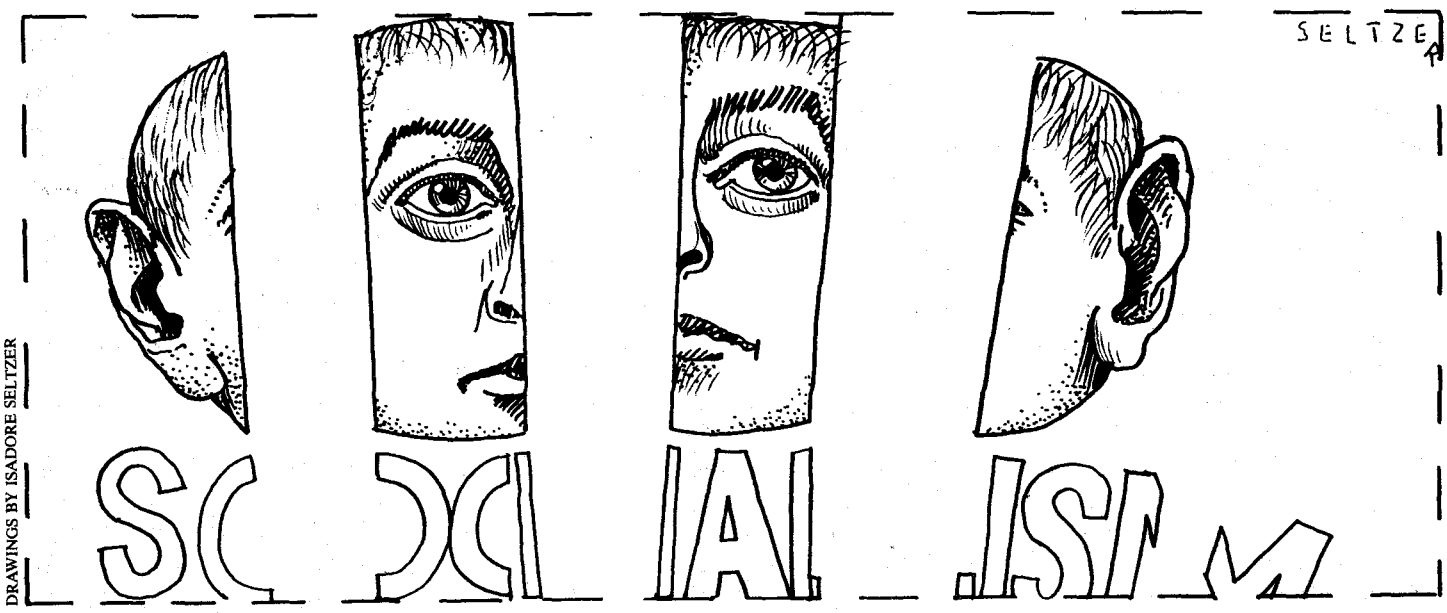
The neoliberals, echoing Ronald Reagan, tell us we can't solve social problems by "throwing money at them." But why not throw money at them? During the New Deal, aides to President Roosevelt's brain truster Rexford Tugwell proposed that unemployed workers receive benefits equal to the last wage they earned. Roosevelt turned down the idea, but few people disparaged it as socialism. If the public has an aversion to paying people for not working, how about initiating a comprehensive jobs program? The money is available. The Reagan tax cut of 1981 gave rich people and corporations $750 billion in tax reductions, and his expanded military budget gave contractors billions more in profits. Add to those sums the record $380 billion in "tax expenditures," or reduced tax rates, which enable stock market speculators, for example, to take additional write-offs. The money is there, if Congress is willing to redistribute the wealth from the rich to the poor, another old-fashioned socialist idea that seems to have been forgotten.

It is true that throwing money at social problems is not the final solution. Structural economic changes are needed to insure full employment. But throwing money at the problem is necessary until basic programs can be put in place. Most socialists favor a campaign to provide jobs for everyone, but the campaign has not been pursued with much vigor, perhaps because some socialists do not want to divorce themselves from Keynesian liberals.

A host of economic and social problems demand old-time radical solutions, but radicals are not proposing them. The American banking system could collapse if developing countries default on the $800 billion in loans they owe banks in the United States and other industrial nations, or if there are a few more near-bankruptcies like Continental Illinois's. Why aren't radicals calling for nationalization of the banks to avoid or mitigate the impending catastrophe? Today's farm crisis is becoming as severe as the one in the mid-1920s. Why is no one calling for the formation of a farmer-labor party to deal with it?

Or take the most important issue of our times, the arms race. Leftists of another day called for disarmament, for the abolition of war and the war machine—not for arms control or a nuclear freeze. I have no quarrel with a freeze as a first step to disarmament, but socialists ought to be leading the crusade for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Most of them believe in abolition, but too many of them accept the idea that a "minimal deterrent" is needed because "you can't trust the Russians." It is true that the Soviet government can't be trusted, but socialists should be insisting that no government can be trusted, including our own. The arms race feeds on its own momentum, driven by technology and constituencies with an enormous monetary and ideological stake in it. Socialists ought to reassert their unequivocal opposition to armaments and take up the cudgels for an effective world court and an international police force to resolve disputes between nation-states. Here again moderation is no virtue, and so-called new ideas are only an excuse for drifting toward liberalism.

America is at a critical moment in its history, beset by the dangers of depression, Presidential tyranny and war. But although it would be folly to believe that a broad-based socialist party could be organized overnight, we can form groups and coalitions to promote specific socialist initiatives. Thousands of militant trade unionists would be receptive to a national labor caucus to promote solidarity and democracy. It may not be as easy to organize the jobless as it was in the early 1930s, when there was no unemployment



DRAWINGS BY ISADORE SELTZER

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compensation or welfare assistance, but a national movement for the unemployed could attract thousands of people whose plight is ignored by the government. On the economic front, there is need to establish separate organizations dedicated to economic planning, socialization of the banks and cooperative approaches to farm problems. There are opportunities for socialists to promote the cause of disarmament within existing antiwar groups, particularly Mobilization for Survival and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign. That doesn't exhaust the possibilities for initiatives that would enable socialists not only to talk like radicals but to act like radicals. In the long run these would lay the groundwork for a socialist movement, perhaps structured like the Populist Party of the 1890s.

Radicals have become fearful of taking extreme positions because the main body of socialists works within the Democratic Party and does not want to isolate itself from mainstream liberals by arguing too fervently for socialist planks, and because we all have become a little demoralized. We have become fearful of acting outside "respectable" boundaries. Nothing could be more harmful to our cause; nothing could give greater support to Reaganism than a timid, debilitated left. We need more scholarly discussion on this subject—and, even more, socialist initiatives and organizations to implement them. □

NO TIME FOR ORTHODOXY

Hard Questions On Nicaragua

MICHAEL MASSING

Last November 2, *The New York Times* featured a refreshingly original Op-Ed piece on Nicaragua's upcoming election. It was written by George Black, editor of *Report on the Americas*, the bimonthly publication of the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA). The election, wrote Black, presented a "unique opportunity for a third world revolution to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the world." Sadly, he added, that opportunity had been squandered because of "intransigence" by the United States and division within the Sandinista leadership. While denouncing the Reagan Administration's "cruel and costly war" against Nicaragua, Black also admonished Sandinista hard-liners who had "undermined" the election's credibility abroad. The article said that the Reagan Administration would seize on an imperfect electoral process to step up the pressure on Nicaragua, and that, in turn, would "only vindicate the more dogmatic members of the directorate."

Black's analysis created a furor on the left. He received dozens of irate letters accusing him of selling out the revolu-

Michael Massing is a freelance writer who lives in New York City.

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tion. NACLA sent out a letter signed by its staff, responding to the criticism and dissociating itself from the article. The response was so fierce that Black felt compelled to explain himself in a three-page open letter in his own publication.

The article did make some controversial points. Black described the Nicaraguan election as a "travesty," a harsh characterization of an exercise that was remarkable for having occurred at all. And by blaming the Sandinista *comandantes* for the opposition Coordinadora Democrática's failure to participate in the election, Black minimized the coalition's own responsibility. Many news accounts indicated that the Coordinadora, pressured by the United States, had never intended to take part.

Nonetheless, the outcry over the article was out of proportion to any such flaws. To some, the very notion of a split in the Sandinista leadership was unimaginable. Others objected to Black's tactlessness in discussing the division publicly. Exposing the revolution's shortcomings, they contended, encourages its enemies.

There is something to be said for that idea. U.S. policy in Central America is founded on an insidious double standard which denounces the violations of human rights in Nicaragua while ignoring vastly more grotesque abuses in El Salvador and Guatemala. The President's wild claims about Nicaragua's "reign of terror" have set the agenda for debate in Congress and for coverage in the press. Above all, Nicaragua is a country at war, struggling against the most powerful nation on earth. As Washington seeks to make the Sandinistas cry *tío*, the left must intensify its efforts to bring the truth to the American people.

But it should be the whole truth. A watershed in Latin American politics, the Nicaraguan experience raises important questions about the nature of contemporary revolution. The usual answers no longer satisfy. Unfortunately the U.S. left has not led the way in finding new ones. Too often, it has adopted a reflexive stance, seeing all events inside Nicaragua through the prism of U.S. aggression. U.S. policy, of course, plays a critical role in shaping Sandinista policy. In the end, however, such a one-note approach provides a narrow basis for analysis.

The neoliberals have stepped into the breach. By purporting to condemn excesses in Washington and Managua, they have staked out the moral high ground in the debate over the revolution. The neoliberals' visceral hostility to the Sandinistas, however, has made their views almost indistinguishable from President Reagan's. Now that their standard-bearer, Arturo Cruz, has thrown in his lot with the *contras*, the neoliberals have little choice but to do the same. In their search for a hypothetical middle ground in Nicaragua, they resemble the character Pyle in Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*. A headstrong agent of the U.S. government, Pyle seeks to create a "third force" in postcolonial Vietnam and, to that end, justifies the most wanton meddling in that country's internal affairs. Although Greene was writing about Americans in Vietnam during the 1950s, he could have been describing liberal critics of Nicaragua three decades later. Today's not-so-quiet Americans mimic the Administration's refusal to recognize that a revolution has occurred in Nicaragua.

The question is, what kind of revolution is it? George Black's Op-Ed piece was one foray beyond the usual time-worn answers. Contrary to the claims of Black's critics, a division in the Sandinista leadership does exist, and it is central to understanding the internal dynamic of the revolution. The differences of opinion among the *comandantes* are deeply rooted in the history of the struggle against Somoza. Prior to 1979, several groups contended for leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (F.S.L.N.). One faction, the Terceristas, believed that the success of the revolution depended on establishing a broad-based coalition opposed to Somoza; thus they forged ties with sympathetic elements in the church and the middle class. Another group, Prolonged Popular War (G.P.P.), regarded the peasantry as the pillar of the revolution and stressed the importance of rural insurgency in the fight against the dictatorship.

Those arguments continue to be voiced in the ruling National Directorate. In public, the directorate's nine members have maintained remarkable unity. In private, however, the debate has often been sharp. The moderates, heirs of the Terceristas, include first and foremost President Daniel Ortega. (Although not a Tercerista, Agriculture Minister Jaime Wheelock is also generally included in this camp.) The moderates espouse socialism but reportedly believe that attaining it requires an extended transition period. They support a mixed economy, accommodation with the middle class, a degree of political pluralism and adherence to a nonaligned foreign policy.

The radicals, remnants of the G.P.P., include Interior Minister Tomás Borge and Sandinista Party chief Bayardo Arce. They are said to favor a more rapid passage to socialism as a means of helping Nicaragua's poor, in whose name the revolution was made. The radicals are dubious about the value of political pluralism and accommodation with the middle class. They advocate a system of popular power and mass mobilization similar to the Cuban model. They also favor close alignment with the Soviet bloc.

Ever since the Sandinistas came to power, the moderates have retained the upper hand; their supremacy was formalized by Daniel Ortega's nomination and election as President. Still, government policy commonly combines elements of both political tendencies, producing an uneasy mix of freedom and restraint. Treatment of the press is a good example. U.S. progressives generally accept Sandinista claims that national security requires press censorship. *La Prensa* is dismissed as a reactionary pulp sheet doing the dirty work of counterrevolution, much as *El Mercurio* did in Salvador Allende's Chile.

This is far too neat. Certainly *La Prensa* will not win any awards for balanced journalism. The newspaper's hostility to the Sandinistas is faithfully reflected in its frequent and harsh criticisms of the government. For journalists in El Salvador and Guatemala, comparable reporting could prove fatal. Now *La Prensa* is receiving $100,000 in supplies from the National Endowment for Democracy,

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further opening itself to the charge of outside influence.

Nonetheless, government censorship in Nicaragua routinely exceeds the requirements of national security. In just one week last August, at a time when controls were relaxed in anticipation of the election, Sandinista censors rejected articles about the country's cement shortage, a strike threat by bank employees in Matagalpa, the enthusiastic applause that greeted a priest's appearance at a baseball game, protests by teen-agers against the draft, protests by the teen-agers' mothers against the draft, statements by Arturo Cruz demanding free elections, and the Catholic radio station's inability to get needed parts through customs. Which aspects of national security did those stories threaten?

La Prensa's survival attests to the Sandinistas' political savvy: shutting the paper down would cost the revolution plenty of support abroad. Leaving aside such tactical considerations, however, what is the role of press freedom in the Nicaraguan revolution? Is censorship consistent with revolutionary principles? Does the U.S. left condone it?

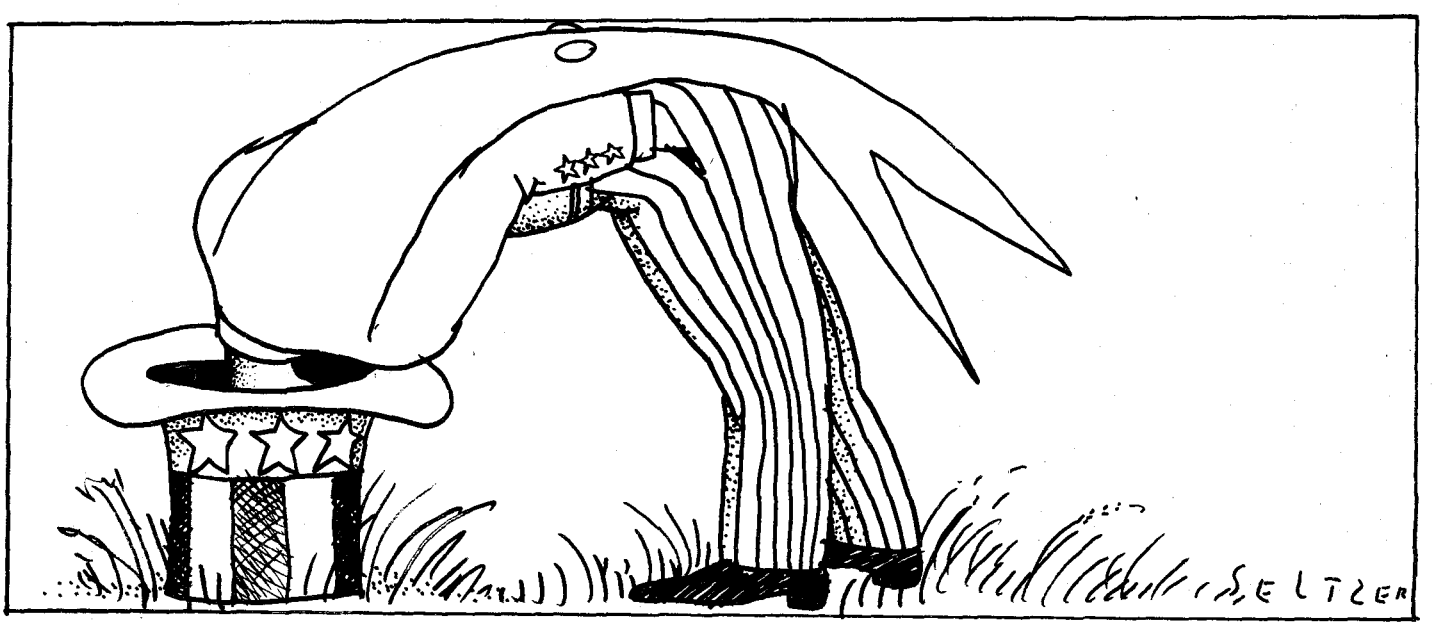
The Sandinistas' labor policies also raise questions. U.S. progressives have generally ignored the situation of Nicaraguan workers, except to dismiss the country's nongovernment trade unions as stalking horses for imperialism or minions of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. In fact, the Sandinistas have set up their own labor organization, the Sandinista Workers Confederation (C.S.T.), and have pressured individual unions to affiliate with it. Holdouts have found their organizing activities obstructed by government bureaucrats or, more menacing, disrupted by *turbas* ("mobs"). In 1983, some eighteen organizers of the independent Nicaraguan Workers Confederation (C.T.N.) were thrown in jail, "apparently for holding meetings and conducting CTN business," according to an April 1984 Americas Watch report. (Virtually all have since been released.) Last summer, *turbas* forced the leaders of the Confederation of Labor Unity, another independent body, to abandon their headquarters in Managua.

From 1982 until last summer, strikes were outlawed in Nicaragua, causing widespread discontent among workers, most of whom had not received a raise in several years. Last August, the right to strike was restored, but the government still frowns on those who exercise it. When workers do walk out, the Sandinista confederation often ignores them. When employees of the Victoria brewery called a wildcat strike last summer, for instance, they received little support from the C.S.T.

To its credit, the government has reacted to such actions with relative restraint. In the case of the Victoria walkout, it negotiated an agreement with the brewery workers. Furthermore, the war has limited the government's ability to increase wages; it has also blurred the distinction between strikes and economic sabotage. Still, the questions must be asked: Does an antistrike policy have any place in a socialist revolution? Can the arrest of labor leaders be justified? Should workers be pressured to join government unions?

Foreign policy is the knottiest area of all. In the course of protesting U.S. intervention, the left has accepted at face value Sandinista claims of nonalignment. Managua's relationship with the Soviet bloc is justified as a defensive reaction to U.S. attacks or, more abstractly, as a legitimate exercise of sovereignty. Actually the Sandinistas' foreign policy is not so clear-cut, reflecting as it does differing views in the leadership. On one hand, Managua has tried to maintain good relations with the West. It has cultivated ties with France, Spain, Italy and the Scandinavian countries, and retains observer status in the Socialist International. Nicaragua has sought close relations with Mexico and Venezuela and has adroitly forged ties with sympathetic groups in the United States. Last November's election was held partly to reassure Nicaragua's Western friends that the revolution is on a democratic course.

At the same time, Nicaragua has established substantial military links with the Soviet bloc. Although hastened by U.S. aggression, Managua's move eastward has roots in the F.S.L.N.'s anti-imperialist history and ideology. Unlike Allende's Popular Unity government, the Sandinistas came to power at a time when the United States seemed prepared to live with revolution in Latin America. The Carter Admin-



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istration even offered Nicaragua $75 million in aid. But relations quickly soured. Some responsibility lay with an obstructive U.S. Congress, which long delayed approval of the aid and attached onerous conditions to it. But matters were not helped by Nicaragua's rapidly strengthening ties to socialist bloc countries, particularly Cuba. The Reagan Administration's warnings about Nicaragua's status as a Cuban puppet are, of course, nonsense; if anything, Cuba has had a moderating influence on the Sandinistas. Nonetheless, the ties between Managua and Havana created tensions with Panama, Costa Rica and other onetime friends of the revolution. Those tensions increased when, soon after their triumph, the Sandinistas began providing assistance to the Salvadoran rebels. Thus relations between Managua and Washington became strained even before President Reagan took office. Since 1981, Nicaragua's military ties to Moscow and Havana have provided plenty of ammunition to Administration hard-liners eager to portray the revolution as a Soviet-inspired threat.

Given Washington's demonstrated ability to undo revolutions in the hemisphere, would the Sandinistas be better off pursuing a policy of accommodation? In the past year, the *comandantes* seem to have moved toward such a policy. During last year's negotiations with the United States in Manzanillo, Mexico, Nicaragua offered to reduce its military reliance on the Soviet bloc, cut the size of its armed forces and stop assisting the Salvadoran guerrillas; in return, the United States would cease supporting the *contras*. The Nicaraguans also initialed a draft of the Contadora peace plan. More recently, President Ortega announced that his government would not seek any new weapons systems, including MIG fighters. This is worlds away from the often defiant policy that characterized the early years of the revolution. Unfortunately, the United States steadfastly refuses to recognize this shift. Its recent breakoff of the talks in Manzanillo underscores its obstinate refusal to consider a negotiated settlement.

Still, the course of the revolution indicates that progressives in this country need to develop a more nuanced analysis of the United States' role as a superpower. The notion of spheres of influence is distasteful; nonetheless, they exist, and policy analysis needs to take them into account. Following up on Nicaragua's proposed settlement at Manzanillo, should the left advocate a trade-off between revolutionary governments and the United States? Revolutionaries would recognize that, however unjustly, the United States regards the Caribbean Basin as its backyard and stands ready to enforce that claim. Accordingly, revolutionary governments would renounce any military relationship with the Soviet bloc and pledge not to assist revolutionary forces in the region. In return, they would receive a pledge of nonintervention from the United States. In brief, should revolutionary countries in the region be "Finlandized" if that is the only means of insuring their survival?

The Nicaraguan experience also suggests the need to revise certain axioms about the internal revolutionary process. A good place to start is the formulation, accepted by some on the left, that in revolutionary societies, freedom and equality do not mix. In this view, political liberties, however desirable in the abstract, are expendable if they conflict with such immediate priorities as feeding people, building schools, administering inoculations. What good is an election if children don't have enough to eat? What good is a free press if people are too uneducated to read it?

Aside from the obvious moral objections, the equality-freedom dichotomy is becoming obsolete from a practical standpoint. One clear lesson of the Cuban revolution is that constructing socialism requires building an adequate material base. That, in turn, means enlisting the entrepreneurial talents of the middle class. The Sandinistas have accepted this logic and have committed themselves to maintaining a mixed economy.

Once the private sector is conceded an economic role, important political implications follow. The existence of a thriving middle class presupposes vigorous demands for a free press, multiparty elections and other features of Western-style democracy. Preserving the private sector but denying its political aspirations can produce serious strains. This has occurred in Yugoslavia, where economic decentralization has produced growing political stress, and in China, where creeping capitalism has engendered demands for intellectual freedom.

Much of the current tension in Nicaragua stems from this unresolved conflict. In a sense, the Sandinistas are grappling with a new type of system which attempts to maintain a private sector within a Leninist-style "vanguard party." So far, it is unclear how much political freedom the Sandinistas will allow—or how little the middle class will settle for. How much press freedom can a vanguard-party system accommodate? What role will nongovernment unions play? How much power will be accorded opposition parties?

However flawed, last November's election was an encouraging step in the direction of pluralism. Can that trend continue? At this point, the primary obstacle is the United States. True to its history in the region, Washington seems determined to frustrate a moderate outcome in Nicaragua. The Administration delights in noting the "concessions" its militaristic policy has won; it remains blind to how that same policy has strengthened the radicals within the directorate and forced a crackdown on the opposition in the country. If, instead, the United States would like to bolster the moderates, it has a ready means of doing so: cutting off aid to the *contras*.

Meanwhile, as the debate within the Sandinista leadership unfolds, must the left in the United States remain mute? George Black's recent experience is not encouraging. True, that case is complicated by Black's connection with NACLA, which can rightly expect its members to conform to certain common principles. But "conforming" should not mean orthodoxy. When it comes to an event like the Nicaraguan revolution, the left cannot afford the luxury of dogma. Its own intellectual vitality is at stake. So is its credibility. In the short term, unfettered debate might seem risky. In the long term, it is the only honest course. □

Readers are invited to comment.

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THE WAR-TAX RESISTERS

People Who Are Deducting Defense

RICHARD CAPLAN

If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood.

—Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"

More and more Americans are assuming personal responsibility for the militarism their tax dollars purchase. This year thousands of them will refuse to pay all or part of their income tax, file under protest or refuse to pay Federal excise taxes specifically earmarked for military purposes.

There's nothing new about this phenomenon. As long ago as 1637 the Algonquin Indians refused to pay taxes for the improvement of local Dutch fortifications. And in 1846 Thoreau went to jail rather than pay the poll tax that helped finance the U.S. war with Mexico. But what is striking today is the growing number of supporters the campaign is attracting. "I used to think . . . this was an off-the-wall, peculiar obsession of a handful of particular Quakers," said Bill Strong, a retired bank officer and a Quaker tax resister, in an interview with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. We're convinced now that this is moving to the center."

Exactly how many war-tax resisters there are is anybody's guess. Some of them are silent protesters who deliberately live below the taxable income level, thus registering their dissent without violating the law. Others don't file and never publicize their action. The I.R.S. estimates that last year 2,000 Americans registered a protest against defense spending by withholding all or part of their taxes, but that figure is suspect. In a 1981 report, the Comptroller General concluded that "[I.R.S.] information on the extent of the illegal tax protester problem is understated." And I.R.S. examinations officer William Roth concedes that the number of war-tax resisters has quadrupled since 1980.

Kathy Levine of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee, a coalition of seventy-five groups, puts the number between 10,000 and 20,000, up from 3,000 in 1977. If she is right, the level of resistance is approaching that during the Vietnam War era, the highest in American history. Levine says the current upward trend started when Jimmy Carter broke his pledge to cut military spending and reduce the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Much of the protest's current momentum, she says, stems from frustration with the stalled nuclear freeze campaign and Ronald Reagan's military brinkmanship.

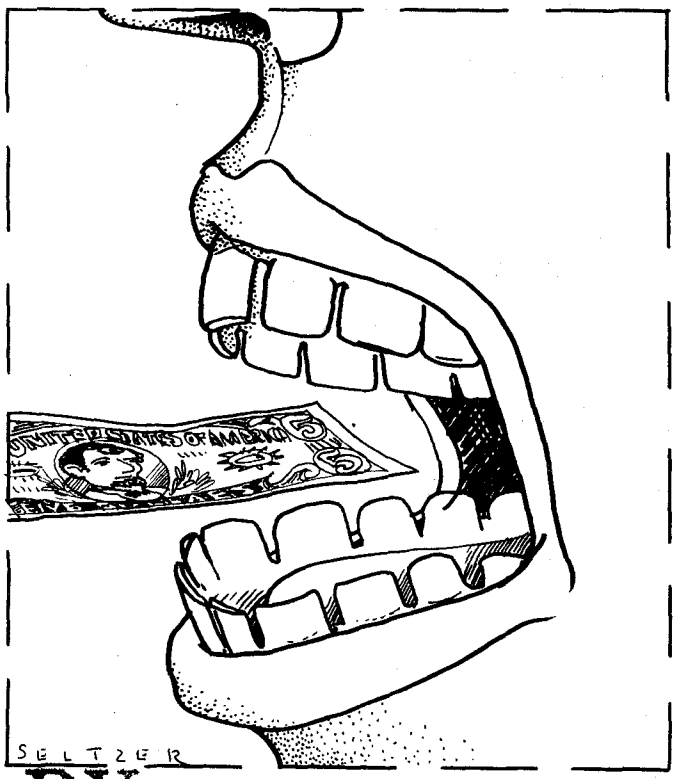
Richard Caplan is a freelance writer who lives, involuntarily, below the taxable income level.

The extent of resistance to the Federal excise tax on long-distance telephone service, which has been used to fund military expenditures since World War I, is even more difficult to gauge. Nonpayment of the tax, which Reagan raised from 1 percent to 3 percent in 1983 to help finance his military buildup, does not result in a cutoff of telephone service, so many people quietly deduct it from their bill [see Dave Lindorff, "Dialing for $$," *The Nation*, April 16, 1983]. Because the amounts involved are so small, it is not cost effective for the I.R.S. to pursue every delinquent. The tax has raised an estimated $25 billion for the Pentagon since 1966. Ed Hedemann of the War Resisters League, the nation's oldest secular pacifist organization, says there are many more telephone-tax resisters than income-tax resisters.

As protest against war taxes gains respectability, it appeals to a broader segment of society. At one time the only religious groups to sanction it were those traditionally called peace churches—Quakers, Mennonites and the Brethren. Now denominational support is more ecumenical. When Seattle's Roman Catholic Archbishop, Raymond Hunthausen, announced in 1982 that he was withholding 50 percent of his income tax "to do what I can to avoid supporting or acquiescing to a nuclear arms buildup," his decision did not shock the church as it would have ten years ago.

"In the past there was much more acceptance of the assumption, 'If it's American policy, it's automatically right,'" explains Maury Sheridan, a spokesman for the Archbishop. "Now there's peaceful resistance in many areas. And while many in the church would not do as the Archbishop did, they respect his action in conscience."

The I.R.S. has not changed its views, however; it attached Hunthausen's salary to collect the taxes he refused to pay in 1982 and 1983. "It's not an emotional issue with us," Roth



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explained last year to *USA Today*. "We have an enforcement responsibility." But lack of emotion does not mean lack of tenacity. If the usual methods of harassment—letters, telephone calls and visits—go unheeded, the I.R.S. will attempt to garnishee wages or seize property. One agent even sought out customers of an egg man named Wally Nelson to collect money he had refused to pay the I.R.S. Two of the customers, who were told that Nelson had authorized the collection, were surprised when the man wouldn't take their money. Since each owed only a dollar or so, the agent must have realized that it wasn't worth the effort. Although determined resisters may elude the I.R.S. indefinitely, the bureau frequently triumphs. Still, only a few resisters—fifteen to twenty since World War II—have been jailed.

In 1982 the I.R.S. acquired another weapon—a law that authorizes the bureau to impose a fine of $500 for filing a "frivolous" tax return. The Internal Revenue Code defines such a return as one that is intentionally incorrect "due to a position which is frivolous." So much for clarity. I.R.S. officials have declared that "gratuitous insults" are not frivolous, nor is a "derogatory comment on a politician" or even an obscenity. But when Emily Kahn, a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote, "46% War Tax Refused" on her 1982 return and adjusted it accordingly, that was frivolous. Actually, Kahn's taxes had been withheld from her wages, and the I.R.S. owed her a refund.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which unsuccessfully defended Kahn in a lawsuit against the I.R.S., views the incident as an unwarranted suppression of free speech. "Ms. Kahn's conduct was plainly an effort at communication," her lawyer, Peter Goldberger, argued before a U.S. Court of Appeals. "As expression on a political question—indeed the central political question, how taxpayers' money should be spent—it is entitled to the most scrupulous constitutional protection."

In a letter accompanying her return, Kahn had asked the I.R.S. to deposit the military portion of her tax payment in an escrow account maintained by the Conscience and Military Tax Campaign in Bellport, New York. Established in 1980, the account holds more than $250,000 in trust for some 660 individuals who await passage of legislation that would allow them to divert their tax dollars from activities their consciences cannot sanction.

The alternative envisioned by the Bellport group and others is embodied in the U.S. Peace Tax Fund bill. Introduced in Congress in 1972 as the World Peace Tax Fund bill and likely to be reintroduced this year, the legislation would enable conscientious objectors to apply the military portion of their tax money to projects for, among other things, conversion to a civilian economy and disarmament and to the U.S. Institute of Peace, created by Congress last year to promote nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution.

Marian Franz, executive director of the fund's national campaign, estimates that $2 billion could be generated annually for these activities with passage of the bill. She says eventually she would like to see the fund open to "selective" objectors, those who may oppose part but not all of the government's military agenda.

In the absence of such legislation, many protesters place their tax money in any one of more than fifty-five alternative funds across the nation, which provide grants and loans for the social services Daddy Warbucks neglects. "The fund is a way of saying, Don't invest your money in the Pentagon, invest in your own community," explains Steve Gulick, whose Philadelphia War Tax Resistance Alternative Fund has furnished more than a hundred loans since its creation in 1969 to, among others, Project VOTE and the Elizabeth Blackwell Health Center for Women.

With 97 million tax returns filed last year, war-tax resisters obviously do not constitute a "vast army," in the words of one I.R.S. official. But theirs is one form of protest that the government does not ignore. "I don't expect to bring the Pentagon to its knees," Ed Hedemann explains, "but you never know just how effective any single action will be. Look at Rosa Parks or Thoreau. They turned out to be enormously effective. You do what you can, but war-tax resistance is one of the strongest statements an individual can make." □

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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P.O. Box 2236
East Patchogue, New York 11772

Conscience and Military Tax Campaign
44 Bellhaven Road
Bellport, New York 11713

A DREAM TICKET

Real Democrats Don't Eat Quiche

ISHMAEL REED

Despite his gallant and civilized attempt to win the Presidency, Walter Mondale has been criticized by a number of columnists for his inability to control what they call special-interest groups. For the Democrats to regain the support of white males, more than 60 percent of whom voted for the Republican ticket, they argue, the Democrats must cease to be the party of wimps, a reputation they acquired during the campaign of 1984.

The Democrats can accomplish this in 1988 by nominating two men who've proved that they will have no truck with minorities and "San Francisco Democrats," a ticket that will woo the white Chrysler-convertible-driving fraternity brothers and the he-men who boil beans in the kitchens of their Winnebagos and shoot bears from helicopters.

Ishmael Reed's new novel, Reckless Eyeballing, *will be published next year by St. Martin's/Marek.*

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WORKSHOPS

The Role of The Journal of Critical Opinion ● The Impact of the New Technology ● Postal Regulations ● Ideology and Function ● Culture and Politics ● Ownership and Editorial Policy ● Opportunities for Cooperation.

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By nominating Bernhard Hugo Goetz for President and former San Francisco Supervisor Dan White for Vice President, the Democrats will send a clear signal to millions of virile Americans that the party is abreast of the times, no longer a dispenser of milky, outdated New Deal mush.

Goetz became a hero to millions of potential voters by shooting four young blacks—two of them in the back—when they "accosted" him by asking for $5. According to early news reports, three were carrying sharpened screwdrivers, though New York *Daily News* columnist Jimmy Breslin said on the CNN show *Crossfire* that the screwdrivers weren't sharpened. As for those who felt that Goetz's reaction was way out of proportion to the crime—assuming it can be established that a crime was committed—well, what do you expect from those epicene supporters of secular humanism and other wimpy philosophies?

Dan White showed his opposition to the weak-sister political ideas of the Democratic left by assassinating Harvey Milk, a gay Supervisor, and Mayor George Moscone, a charismatic Democrat who brought the locked-out into San Francisco City Hall. Some say that had he lived, Moscone would have become Governor of California or a candidate for national office.

White's lawyer said that the defendant, who finished off Moscone while he lay wounded from earlier gunshot wounds, killed the two men because he had eaten too many Twinkies. The Democrats can expect large contributions to the Goetz-White ticket from the manufacturers of junk food.

The 1988 Republican ticket, composed of Vice President George Bush and Representative Jack Kemp, won't have a chance against Goetz-White. During his debate with Goetz, a poised Bush will display an impressive knowledge of both foreign and domestic affairs. But he will lose the debate in one dramatic moment when Goetz will turn to him and say, "You only tried to kick a little ass; I went out and burned some." Bush will have no rejoinder, and in his network commentary following the debate, George Will will award the debate to Goetz and will describe his dramatic flourish as truly Hobbesian.

Although the Republicans will run on a complicated platform, Goetz and White will be vague about theirs, or limit themselves to a couple of promises. Maybe the Army of God will be appointed to screen all potential Supreme Court nominees, that is if we need a Supreme Court. Hell, what's wrong with the law of the jungle?

As for foreign policy, Grenada already having been occupied, maybe the pair will promise to send the marines into Berkeley, California, to take care of those City Council members who are reluctant to salute the flag.

If support for the Goetz-White ticket falls off as Election Day approaches, the team can always galvanize the voters by staging some sort of electrifying event. Perhaps Goetz can shoot some young black patrons of a video-game arcade, saying he was once accosted there, or, if he wants to take the high road and leave the hatchet job—or shall we say trigger job—to his Vice-Presidential nominee, White can always get loaded on candy, sneak into the basement window of some City Hall and correct a left-leaning mayor the way he corrected George Moscone, who didn't even have a screwdriver to protect himself.

The Republicans will spend millions on their campaign; the Goetz-White ticket will cost very little. A full-page advertisement in the *National Enquirer* with the slogan "You Know Where We Stand," or "Why Not the Worst?" or, a week before the election, "Vote Tuesday: Make Their Day," will do.

President Goetz's first appointment will be George Will as press secretary. During his first news conference Will will admit that he was the person who suggested that Goetz challenge Bush on who was the better "ass-kicker"—the challenge that some will say gave the debate, and thus the election, to Goetz. Will will then comment on the morality of the new "state of nature" Administration, quoting seventeenth-century British philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who was also a bootlicker for royalty. In a wink at traditional values, Washington will be renamed Dodge City, but the biggest surprise will come after pollsters analyze the voting trends. The black backlash that was expected against Goetz and White will have failed to materialize. Millions of blacks like Clint Eastwood, too. □

Brazil's

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

other nation in Latin America.

Yet in the "other" Brazil, street peddlers and beggars have taken over the downtown area of Recife, the largest city of the drought-ridden northeast. A similar phenomenon is occurring in Rio de Janeiro and other urban centers, the result of a recession that has left an estimated 40 percent of the population unemployed or underemployed. Infant mortality is on the rise, perhaps a tragic blessing because the number of abandoned children is said to range from 12 million to 20 million. With its population of 130 million multiplying at an annual rate of 3 percent—one of the world's highest—Brazil faces the possibility of becoming the India or China of the Western Hemisphere.

The two Brazils advance divergent agendas—one emphasizing the expansion of wealth, the other its distribution. The conviction that industrial growth and the exploitation of natural resources will propel the country to its rightful destiny is deeply embedded in the national psyche and has until recently overshadowed demands for social justice. Brazilians are beginning to realize that the dimensions of the country's human problems pose a risk of destabilization. This threat helped elect Neves.

In 1964 a populist movement supported and to some extent controlled by the left seemed poised to gain power in the name of Brazil's dispossessed. The armed forces intervened, ousting President João Goulart and crushing the

Joseph A. Page, a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center, has written extensively about Brazil.

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political forces that had been pressing for radical change. But instead of turning the government over to civilian politicians who represented the interests of the elite, the military settled in for the long haul, selected presidents from its own ranks, repressed dissent and instituted economic policies designed to encourage the formation of industries through private investment, both domestic and foreign.

That strategy yielded spectacular results. In 1969 the gross national product began to increase at an annual rate of about 10 percent, and the Brazilian miracle was born. By 1973 the country was exporting nearly $10 billion worth of goods, up from less than $3 billion in 1968. For the upper and middle classes, it was a time of heady prosperity. Optimistic observers felt that the country had reached a takeoff point and that Brazil's ambition to become a world industrial power was on the verge of being realized.

The pursuit of growth obscured its costs, however. Heedless industrialization transformed Cubatão, nestled near the sea at the foot of a plateau thirty miles southeast of São Paulo, into one of the world's most polluted towns. Poisonous fumes and liquid discharges from twenty-three factories, many producing petrochemicals, have taken an unconscionable human toll over the years, and the region has become known as the Valley of Death. This process has been repeated on a smaller scale elsewhere in Brazil.

More than half the country's population did not share in the boom. Workers saw their real wages shrink. The shift from labor-intensive to mechanized farm production cost peasants their jobs and homes. Income was redistributed from the poor to the rich, a process symbolized by the nickname bestowed on one of the country's planning ministers, "Hood Robin." The national motto, "Order and Progress," took on a new meaning: order for the have-nots and progress for the haves.

There turned out to be a fatal flaw in the generals' grand design. Brazil was the Third World's leading petroleum importer, and when oil prices quadrupled in the wake of the 1973 Middle East war, the miracle turned sour. The growth rate tailed off sharply, and balance-of-payments deficits, exacerbated by declines in prices for Brazilian exports, ballooned the nation's foreign debt to a staggering $100 billion. An industrial recession and an inflation rate that is expected to exceed 250 percent this year have combined to plunge the country into what may be the worst economic crisis in its history.

Unable to stem the downturn and suspecting that the populace would grow increasingly hostile toward their stewardship, the armed forces opted for a gradual return to a limited, or "safe," form of democracy. The regime lifted censorship, allowed left-wing exiles to return to the country, eased restrictions on political activity and put forward a plan to permit a special electoral college to choose the next president. It stacked the college to insure victory for the candidate of the Democratic Social Party, or P.D.S., which traditionally had supported the government.

The forces unleashed by the democratization process turned out to be more than the regime could handle. Gen. João Baptista Figueiredo, who assumed the presidency in 1979, had never been a skillful politician, and after undergoing open-heart surgery he was not physically up to the task of manipulating his succession. He let the P.D.S. nomination fall to Paulo Salim Maluf, the controversial former governor of the state of São Paulo. Unabashedly pro-business and pro-U.S., Maluf aroused such distaste in

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The conference, which was originally inspired by Carey McWilliams, will be held at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, and spaces are being held for Nation Associates at the sessions on Saturday, April 13. Panels that day will cover "The Role of the Journal of Critical Opinion," "Ideology and Function" and other topics (see page 401 of this week's issue for more details). The $150 registration fee for Saturday's program will be waived for Nation Associates.

Space is limited, so it is essential to reserve a place either by writing to Box CM, The Nation, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011, or by calling Laird Harrison (212) 242-8400 by April 5. We will then send you a fuller description of the day's program.

We hope to see many of you there.

Hamilton Fish 3rd
Victor Navasky

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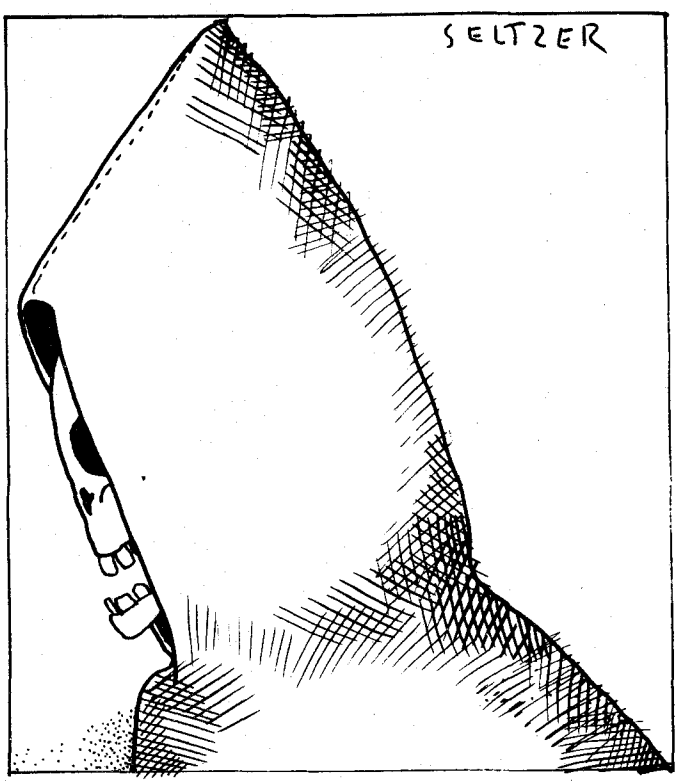
his own party that P.D.S. electors defected to the opposition candidate, Tancredo Neves, in overwhelming numbers.

In many ways the defeat of Maluf represents the reverse of the 1964 coup and suggests that the other Brazil has grown so in strength and number that it can exercise a veto over national policy. There was much vague talk about Maluf running a corrupt campaign. (As a joke making the rounds had it, When he comes near you, keep your hands on your pockets, not to keep him from taking something out but to stop him from putting something in.) One also heard hints of prejudice against his Lebanese ancestry. Yet a much more likely explanation for his defeat is that the military feared that a Maluf presidency would bring popular unrest to the flash point.

Last year millions of Brazilians took to the streets of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and other urban centers to voice their demand for a direct presidential election. Those demonstrations expressed not only a rejection of the military regime but also the intensity of feeling against Maluf. His Reaganesque philosophy aroused a sense of desperation among the poor, to whom trickle-down economics had brought nothing but misery for two decades.

Although messianic movements in Brazil's interior have occasionally produced spectacular outbursts of popular violence (Mario Vargas Llosa's novel *The War of the End of the World* chronicles the most famous of them), the poor people of Brazil are traditionally passive and nonviolent. The looting of food supplies and the riots triggered by failures in the rail transportation system in recent years, however, suggest that their forbearance has a limit. Moreover, a steadily increasing crime rate, which has brought concern for personal security to a near-fever pitch in urban areas, is undeniably related to growing poverty. The armed



forces may have concluded that the free-market policies proposed by Maluf eventually would have set off spontaneous uprisings on a large scale, creating the need for massive repression, which they were not willing to carry out for a civilian politician whom they disliked.

Therefore, even though Figueiredo had indicated his staunch disapproval of Neves and the leftist elements behind him, the election of the opposition standard-bearer has served the military's short-term needs. Neves's declaration that he will not prosecute members of the armed forces for past violations of human rights gives off the unmistakable scent of a deal. Brazil's generals have no desire to see a repetition of the Argentine example. Nor will the new chief executive interfere with the $1 billion-a-year arms industry, whose production is expected to increase as much as eightfold before the end of the decade.

The immediate challenges facing Neves are formidable indeed. His pledges to address the country's pressing social needs have raised hopes among the masses. Yet he must also confront the demands of foreign creditors and the International Monetary Fund for further austerity measures, which would only add to the hardships of those Brazilians who have suffered most in recent years. The unwieldy coalition that brought him to the presidency spans much of the political spectrum and may well come apart once he is forced to make difficult choices.

Whether Neves will be physically up to the task remains an issue. He turned 75 on March 4, and nine days later, on the eve of his scheduled inauguration, he underwent intestinal surgery. Although his doctors insisted that his overall health was excellent, a second operation, on March 20, leaves unclear when he will assume office. José Sarney, a P.D.S. defector who ran as Neves's vice-presidential candidate, took over as interim President on March 15, and uncertainty obscures the political panorama.

Leftists in the broad front that supported Neves's candidacy range from social democrats to communists. Their decision to follow a gradualist course indicates that they have a mature grasp of political reality but also that they lack an alternative. The pre-eminent personality on the left, Leonel Brizola, might have won a popular vote but could not have prevailed in the electoral college and, in any event, would have been unacceptable to the military. The firebrand brother-in-law of President Goulart, Brizola had advocated violent resistance to the 1964 coup. Even though the armed forces acquiesced in his return from exile and in his 1982 election as governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro, they continue to regard him with distrust, despite his solid record in office. No other figure had emerged around whom the left could rally, so it made sense to join the Neves coalition.

The other Brazil may have made its presence felt in the election of Neves, but its political power is still limited. At the same time the developed Brazil cannot ignore the massive poverty and inequality that give the nation its striking duality. Brazil may yet be able to reconcile the demands of growth and social justice, but the polarizing effect of government policies of the past twenty years has left the country's golden future as distant as ever. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Odd Couple

JOHN SEABROOK

CORRESPONDENCE ACROSS A ROOM. *By V.I. Ivanov and M.O. Gershenzon. Translated by Lisa Sergio. Marlboro Press. 67 pp. Paper $7.25.*

They're much more than a curiosity, these magnificent letters, but their occasion is certainly unusual. Imagine the Soviet Union, early in the tumultuous summer of 1920. The Red Army is marching on Warsaw, the Second Congress of the Comintern is gathering in Moscow, in the villages the peasants, beleaguered by civil war, are rebellious. Tired, ill and disappointed, two authors—V.I. Ivanov, a symbolist poet, and M.O. Gershenzon, a literary historian—check into the Sanatorium for Scientific and Literary Workers, where they share a room.

The two aren't exactly compatible. Ivanov is, with Alexander Blok and Andrei Bely, a leader of the symbolist movement. Perhaps "prophet" is a better word. He looks otherworldly and is prone to vatic utterances. His poetry is opulent, esoteric and mystical, laden with classical allusion and Christian imagery. Like his fellow symbolists, Ivanov initially greeted the October Revolution as the secular fulfillment of the spiritual revolution begun by Christ; now, as with Blok, his ardor is dampened. The violence and chaos that have driven him to this rest home scarcely suggest divinity.

To make matters worse, he has an atheist and an ultrarevolutionary for a roommate. Gershenzon enthusiastically supports the destruction of all cultural institutions—especially the church. Man must return to a state of nature if he is to be truly free. Gershenzon's romanticism is no less naïve than Ivanov's millennialism, and no more popular with the Bolshevik leadership. Lenin's pamphlet "Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder," condemning utopians like Gershenzon, appeared that summer.

Not surprisingly, these two are unsuccessful at ignoring their differences and getting on with their work. The sanatorium seems to excite the speculative reaches of their minds, and before long their cerebral swordsmanship begins. Eventually, they decide to converse in letters, a decision for which posterity should thank them.

Twelve letters, six each, form the brief text of *Correspondence Across a Room*. The book's brevity in no way suggests its nearly limitless appeal. These letters work like poetry on the imagination and like philosophy on the intellect, without losing the spontaneous vitality that makes a correspondence enjoyable.

Ivanov ("I." from now on) writes first:

> I know, dear friend and neighbor across the way in this room we share, that you are assailed by doubts about personal immortality and about the existence of a personal God. . . . God will raise me up because God is within me. . . . This, my dear neighbor, is what I am thinking in my corner. . . . And you, what will you reply from over there in yours?

G. isn't thinking what I. is thinking. In fact, G.'s sick of knowledge altogether, a bad sign for a scholar, like a shoemaker being sick of leather:

> All this abstraction oppresses me . . . all the intellectual conquests of mankind . . . have become—for me—an onerous burden, like garments too heavy and too encumbering to wear. . . . I look ahead fondly to plunging into some Lethe that would leave my memory cleansed of every religious or philosophical system.

G.'s militant opposition to culture apparently grows from a vocational crisis—he is, after all, a servant of the "intellectual conquests" he so ardently condemns. (His edition of Pushkin's complete works remains the standard one.) His nihilism is more passionate than logical. And though the two men are doctrinally divided, they're psychologically similar: G.'s Letheward longing is the secular equivalent of I.'s eschatological urges. Irony like that makes the dialogue considerably richer than any neat series of dualisms could be.

I. is more coherent than G. but less tolerant, and he becomes sententious when G. challenges his beliefs. Knowledge, he declares in his next letter, is only burdensome when secularized: "You experience culture, not as a living repertory of gifts, but as a subtle mechanism of multiple compulsions."

G. responds that ideas and knowledge were alive once, centuries ago, but now "the 'cultural heritage' weighs upon the personality with the weight of sixty atmospheres and more." Truth has become impersonal. Thanks to Kant and Schopenhauer we no longer trust our personal experience; instead, we clutter our minds with abstractions. God, for example.

Faith is above culture, I. writes back; it allows the believer to transcend "the deadening yoke of tradition":

> The seductive image now before you of a renewed community without Muses and the written word is only a delusion, a sign of decadence as is all Rousseauism, unless the new human community of your vision, severed from its traditional culture, becomes a community of prayer.

It's hard to capture the subtlety and beauty of these exchanges without quoting big chunks of them. More subtle still is the evolution of the authors' relationship. I., initially solicitous, becomes diffident, almost self-righteous; G., who begins laconically, grows more vigorous and provocative with each letter. Both become querulous as the discussion gradually drifts into politics.

In his fourth letter, G. declares a "rebellion is now shaking the earth: the truth of labor and of individual possession is struggling to break free of centuries-old complications, of the abominable fetters of social and abstract ideas." All collective values—morality, theology, the state—must be erased; men must be allowed to become individuals again.

I. responds angrily. The revolution "is not utopian or anarchical or otherwise stamped by individualism." It does not aim to destroy but to restore the old values—specifically Christ's gospel of spiritual freedom—by translating them into social and political freedom. He believes "the conscious proletariat is standing firmly for cultural continuity." G. answers, "in its effort to gain possession of these values, the proletariat is mistaken."

A good deal of self-deception is at work in both positions. It would no

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doubt have surprised the architects of Bolshevik policy to be thought agents of the New Jerusalem. And the melancholy of I.'s later letters suggests he hardly believes this extravagant idea himself. (Thoroughly discouraged, he left the Soviet Union four years later and lived the rest of his life in Italy.) G.'s call for an autonomous culture of peasants and workers is, in hindsight, no less quixotic. The group Proletkúlt did try, in the early 1920s, to create a proletarian art and poetry, but the new artist-workers simply adapted futurist and symbolist techniques, and the scheme was discredited by 1923.

I.'s last letter is his saddest. He has given up logical argument and appeals to G. as a friend. What hope is there for this "period of cultural disarray," when two friends, united by hardship, can't even tolerate each other's opinions, much less agree? In his most impassioned lament, he quotes Tiuchev: "How shall the heart express itself? How shall 'the other' understand? How shall he know what makes you live?"

These are questions the correspondence responds to, never more beautifully than in the closing letter by G. He tenderly acknowledges and shares I.'s anguish. They are both, he admits, victims of their impossibly lofty ideals. I., at least, has his faith:

> Your spirit is not split in two and I am fascinated by this integrity. . . . [But] I live a strangely double life. . . . I love science, the arts, poetry, Pushkin; I feel at home in the cultural family. . . . [And yet] for many years I have heard a secret inner voice telling me, urgently, incessantly: "*This is not it, this is not it!*" In me another will backs off uneasily from culture, from everything being said and done around me, finding all of it boring and futile, like a turmoil of phantoms battling in a void.

Like I., G. feels a better world is promised him, not by God, and not really by Marxism, but "in the eyes of children and on occasion in their words, in the ineffably kind smiles of women, in the compassion of man for man, in forthright and noble simplicity, in the glow suffusing certain words or an unexpected line of poetry that pierces the darkness like lightning at night, in many other things as well, in suffering above all."

Such a letter creates the emotions it describes—compassion, illumination, suffering. To imagine I.'s reaction is to study our own. □

Of Men and Machines

MICHAEL KAZIN

WORK TRANSFORMED: Automation and Labor in the Computer Age. *By Harley Shaiken. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 306 pp. $17.95.*

AMERICA'S WORKING MAN: Work, Home, and Politics among Blue-Collar Property Owners. *By David Halle. University of Chicago Press. 360 pp. $24.95.*

The word "automation" conjures up conflicting images. First there is the pleasing vision of quiet, sanitized factories where expert technicians oversee the manufacture of superbly efficient products. Then there is the nightmarish scene of a corps of robots that has usurped the place of skilled workers and reduced those who remain to mere drudges. Ever since the term "automation" was coined by a Ford engineer in the late 1940s, intellectuals, business people, politicians and a few labor leaders have debated whether it spells technological liberation, a new servitude or a neutral process whose social consequences are up for grabs.

The only group that has not had its say in the debate is the one perhaps most affected by the "high-tech revolution": blue-collar workers. Their collective silence is understandable: the nature of automation differs greatly from industry to industry; unions, since the 1940s, have usually let management have its technological way; and most factory workers have learned to expect nothing more for their efforts than a paycheck and a group of friends. But with computers and robots becoming nearly as ubiquitous as oil spills on the shop floor, a growing number of scholars have begun to criticize automation's effect on the jobs and attitudes of workers.

Harley Shaiken, a researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, may well be the most knowledgeable commentator on these issues. The media certainly seem to think so. Shaiken's statements regularly festoon those stories on "the changing workplace" that appear around Labor Day. Fortunately, he is an "authority" who has actually worked in factories (as a machinist) and one who instinctively takes labor's side. Shaiken's *Work Transformed* presents the sensible argument that computer-driven automation can either enhance or degrade the experience of labor, depending on how it is put to use. "A democratic society and an authoritarian technology," he warns, "are incompatible in the long run."

Shaiken conducts a brief but masterly tour of the brave new factory. He starts in the tool-and-die shop, where highly skilled workers defend their meticulous, individualized methods against management's attempts to rush and homogenize them. He moves on to the design offices, where "virtually any part that can be mathematically defined is producible." He then lingers on the shop floor to describe the uneven application of theoretically dazzling systems with names like CAD/CAM (Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Manufacturing), TOPS (Total Operations Planning System) and Numerical Control. Toward the end of the book, he shows how executives use their megabyte power to shift production overseas and bust unions at home.

While he is fully attentive to the complexities of automation, Shaiken's observations are quite straightforward: engineering designs and corporate hopes must still depend on the participation of wage earners. Robot welders are far cheaper than their human counterparts, but while they don't demand health-care contracts, they do have to come in for repairs. A computerized tool can cut metal to microscopic tolerances, but the slightest programming mistake can result in the ultra-efficient production of useless parts—unless a machinist is free to stop the device and adjust it. Thus, the fully automated factory exists only in the realm of science fiction.

Shaiken makes his case largely through anecdotes, and the best ones come from the auto industry, where constant retooling has been a way of life since Henry Ford invented the assembly line. The largest plant in the Ford empire is located on River Rouge near Detroit; there nearly 20,000 workers turn iron ore, coal and other raw materials into new Mustangs. A decade ago, the management tried to

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institute the TOPS plan, which would have brought much dreaded time-and-motion studies and computerized scheduling into the die-making operations. The skilled workers balked. Why should they spend hundreds of hours refining a system expressly designed to make their skills obsolete? The workers refused to fill out the company's data forms and stood aside when the complex new procedures failed to work as expected. In the end, their supervisors forced the company to cancel the plan because the output of dies had plummeted and showed no sign of rising.

Through this and numerous other examples, Shaiken demonstrates that the reality of the automated workplace corresponds neither to the nightmares of some nor to the idealized fantasies of others. It is in fact a fitful struggle for position and power which employers seem to be winning. Shaiken ends his book by trying to suggest measures that would enable workers not just to stall new technology but to ensure that they benefit from it. He summarizes "A Technology Bill of Rights," which he helped to draft in 1981 for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. The manifesto bravely proclaims that "working people and their communities have a right to share in decisions about, and the gains from, new technology." It offers such ideas as extra corporate taxes on machines that replace workers and a ban on methods that endanger workers' health or the environment. "The goal," writes Shaiken, "will be machines that fit the needs of people rather than the other way around."

Yet the evidence of his book belies his program's confident tone. For example, even though computer-guided cutting tools have cost thousands of workers their jobs, the skilled machinists Shaiken talked to all said, in one way or another, "You can't stop progress." If men like these, who know how creative factory work can be, are fatalistic about technology, imagine the attitudes of assembly-line workers.

In *America's Working Man*, David Halle documents a primary reason why workers don't look to the future with confidence: a majority of those he studied think about their jobs as little as possible. To be sure, Halle, a British-born sociologist, may have stacked the deck a bit. His book is a study of 150 or so men (most from Eastern European

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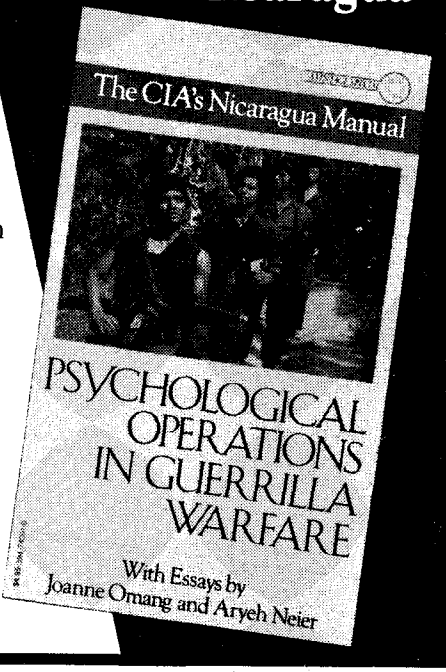

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Catholic backgrounds) who toil in one of America's least glamorous factories—a chemical plant located in the notorious "cancer corridor" along the New Jersey Turnpike.

During the seven years Halle spent interviewing employees of the company he coyly dubs "Imperium," he found only a handful who regarded their work in this automated dynamo as anything more than a way to make good money (about $26,000 a year) and a battle with management for free time. Maintenance mechanics do enjoy the challenge of fixing broken pumps and turbines, but the rest hold hard, dangerous jobs which confer pride only through survival. In the course of their day, Imperium workers breathe and handle synthetic resins and other toxic materials, and then, when the chemicals are packed in drums, the workers must affix a label required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration that "warns the consumer, in some detail, of the health hazards of exposure to the product."

Work may be hell, but their incomes allow these men possessions and comforts never available to their parents. Almost 80 percent own homes, usually in "automobile suburbs," where the shopping mall is the hub of civic life. They eat out regularly, take in an occasional Broadway musical, travel to Las Vegas, Florida and Europe, and have money left over to gamble on football games and horse races. Thus, once they leave the plant, most Imperium workers are "middle-class" consumers. Their Friday-night dinner conversation may differ from that of college professors, but in New Jersey, at least, their choice of restaurants is often the same.

In fact, Halle's point is that such workers do not define themselves by occupation alone, because in addition to the workplace, both the neighborhood and the nation have a significant influence on what they think and how they act. On the job they see themselves as working men, doing physical labor and risking injuries that secretaries and lawyers never encounter. Most men at Imperium mistrust formal education because they remember that their teachers regarded them as "unacademic," and they know that, without a B.A., they will probably never escape Imperium or another plant like it. They grumble about paying union dues to labor leaders they believe are corrupt, but when it comes to preserving wages and seniority, the local union is viewed as a necessity.

Back in the neighborhood, a quite different consciousness reigns. Halle's subjects worry about property taxes, deteriorating public education and local governments that spend money on anything but the police department. Predictably, they follow a path of self-defense: voting against big-spending politicians and enrolling their children in parochial school. In these reactions they are little different from other owners of single-family homes in an economically volatile region. "The middle class is getting screwed in this country," says one Imperium worker about the rising tax assessment on his property. His boss would probably agree.

A kind of self-defense also shapes the racial fears of Imperium workers. Without a trace of guilt, they characterize blacks and recent Latin immigrants as shiftless, violent and incapable of keeping a community "nice." Some are militant segregationists. "Why do I live in Clark?" asks one worker. "Well, there are no niggers in Clark." Declining property values obviously worry these men and their families, but something more fundamental fuels their racism. To reject black neighbors and bilingual education is to buttress the wall that separates them from society's desperate underclass. Ghetto dwellers remind these wage earners of how far one can fall, and they are despised for doing so.

Politics plays an intriguingly vital role in this blue-collar world. In the most original part of the book, Halle portrays Imperium workers as nationalists whose love of country is mixed with a vigorous, cynical populism. They take democratic ideals very seriously while at the same time describing American politicians as crooks who routinely do the bidding of big corporations. According to one older worker, "[F.D.R.] wanted to get into World War II because business wanted it. Wall Street is behind all wars. They're making money off the American people."

Despite the class anger expressed by this combat veteran, he is part of a very American tradition—one that political figures as diverse as Eugene Debs, Huey Long and George Wallace have appealed to effectively. Populism does include a kind of class consciousness, but it is sustained by resentment of the powerful, rather than solidarity with the powerless. Only a few Imperium workers are

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registered Republicans, but in 1980 a majority voted for Ronald Reagan.

Halle writes in a clear, unadorned style which lends authenticity to his findings. In the manner of such previous ethnographers of working-class life as Herbert Gans and William Whyte, he manages to avoid exalting or condescending to his subjects. Only toward the end does Halle let his own leftist politics surface. But his assertion that politics matters because "at each level of Imperium workers' lives . . . there is an identity that contains the seeds of both a progressive and a reactionary response, and which one is dominant will depend on the possibilities people are presented with" is not much more promising or satisfying than Harley Shaiken's wish list for work life improvement through automation.

Both authors beg the same question: How can people who are trying to protect themselves and what they own be attracted to a politics that demands collective action? In fairness, the problem is one that many intellectuals have addressed but that they cannot solve alone. Shaiken and Halle have done their jobs well. Their books supply the raw material for understanding what white male workers confront every day—from robots to taxes to right-wing rhetoric from the White House. That will have to do until a social movement arises capable of convincing millions of Americans that their self-interest depends on pursuing the common good. □

Backlash Country

CLANCY SIGAL

CANARSIE: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism. *By Jonathan Rieder. Harvard University Press. 290 pp. $22.50.*

Neighborhoods are the guts of America. If they go—and they've been slowly strangling since the 1950s—what's left? Shopping malls, high-rises, suburbs: Alphaville. It is a stark economic and social fact that nobody gives a damn about neighborhoods except those who live in them. Even for liberal politicians and city planners, there's something tacky, unfashionable and irritatingly random about neighborhoods. At election time, of course, urban professionals are likely to extol the merits of hard-hatted, flag-waving Archie Bunkers, but nobody goes out to rescue a declining neighborhood except, occasionally, the neighbors themselves. And there's the rub. Rescue from what? In many cases neighborhood people, who feel their backs to the wall, are saving their stoopball Masada from "them," the blacks and Hispanics. It's all about racial balance, a chaos of interests and passions swirling at the feet of bureaucratic titans who control these lives and couldn't care less about what happens half a mile from Manhattan or Chicago's Loop or Nob Hill or Bel Air.

Jonathan Rieder's detailed, sympathetic, fascinating and frustrating account describes how one Brooklyn neighborhood—Canarsie, the end of the line in more ways than one—defended itself against more blacks than it felt it could afford and, more generally, against a liberalism that was once its savior and is now its deadly enemy. It is a tragedy of American life that Rieder's useful book should be accurately subtitled *The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism*. His story could easily be duplicated in parts of most American cities, from Chicago's Marquette Park to Los Angeles's San Fernando Valley. Rieder's book is important—and might have been more so had he spoken in less academic language, and had he described his Canarsians more as individuals and less as elements in a psychological experiment. But he is on the side of the Canarsie angels, even when they act like devils.

When I was a kid, Canarsie, perched as it is along Jamaica Bay in a corner of southeast Brooklyn, was a vaudeville joke. Being from Canarsie was the closest thing to being a city hick. Today, as Rieder notes, "Canarsie is a house-proud neighborhood of about 70,000 people, mainly middle-income Jews and Italians," the children and grandchildren of immigrants. As the book's photographs show, it is "neat and trim . . . the landscape of order," a haven for the lower-middle-class ethnics who ran from Brownsville and East New York when too many of "them"

Clancy Sigal is the author of Going Away, A Weekend in Dinlock *and, most recently,* Zone of the Interior *(Crowell).*

Sacred Groves and Ravaged Gardens

The Fiction of Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, and Flannery O'Connor

Louise Westling

Set against the background of southern society's often rigid code of behavior for women, *Sacred Groves and Ravaged Gardens* examines the strongly willed efforts of Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, and Carson McCullers to realize their own particular visions of womanhood in their lives and in their works. $22.50

The Ordeal of Elizabeth Vaughan

A Wartime Diary of the Philippines

Edited, with an Introduction, by Carol M. Petillo

The Ordeal of Elizabeth Vaughan tells the harrowing story of a young American woman interned with her two young children by the Japanese army during World War II. Written sometimes in anger, sometimes in despair, occasionally in amusement, it is a story of determination in the face of what often seemed a hopeless fate, of bravery born from grim necessity. $24.95

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flooded in. Canarsie was the last stand of people who didn't want to live among "unruly" welfare blacks but who couldn't afford the higher rents elsewhere. This far and no further was the battle cry.

When blacks began spilling over into Canarsie and thirty-one black students were bused into a neighborhood school, the Canarsians mobilized to fight. Because of its violent tactics and appeals to racial unity—techniques and rhetoric often borrowed from the militant black struggles of the 1960s—Canarsie became synonymous with "backlash country, racist thuggery," at least to readers of *The New York Times*. At first, the Jews, with their long tradition of dependence on state rather than family power, were tempted to cut and run; the Italians, proud of their tough reputation for "standing fast," stiffened Jewish spines, while the Jews supplied the Italian demagogues with the rhetoric of pseudoprogressivism.

Between 1975 and 1977 Rieder, a Yale sociologist, hung out in Canarsie to watch the fun and games. Clearly, he was emotionally split. As a conventional liberal, he was on the side of the blacks, but his heart was with the angry ethnics who deeply resented being squeezed by lofty City Hall liberals and black militants demanding restitution for 400 years of deprivation. There was also something else at work on them: a moral grudge, their feeling of having lost much of what their parents worked for, not only materially but spiritually as well.

"When whites looked north across Linden Boulevard, the [black] chaos transfixed them," Rieder says. Soft, sweet memories "of the old immigrant neighborhoods forced them to compare the ghetto and Canarsie. . . . Like archeologists of moral life, they peeled back the layers of time and read signs of vice and virtue in the crumbling buildings." That is precisely what happened to my old neighborhood of Lawndale on Chicago's West Side, which seemed like Shangri-La to us in the 1930s. But once the Jews moved to Evanston and Skokie, the blacks moved into an area that was, to be honest, already decaying, only we couldn't see it then. To this day, a large number of ex-West Side Jews still blame the blacks for "destroying" a neighborhood we, in our turn, had been blamed for wrecking by the Irish and Czechs whose houses we took over in the 1920s.

Rieder's book is rich in similar material and insights, even if his almost deliberate avoidance of the larger urban issues limits its scope. He never really explores the question of just how badly the upper middle class screws people like Canarsians. "The basic fact of life for the residents of Canarsie was the precariousness of their hold on middle-class status, the recency of their arrival . . . and the intense fear that it might be taken from them." The squeeze was on—by utility rates, property sharks, the tax system and busing. "Men sometimes described a vague, malevolent force that was breaking their balls." Because they'd been mugged or scared or shafted one way or another, most Canarsians had come to see liberalism, once the antidote to their economic depression, as the monopoly of an elite who were willing to destroy their beloved neighborhood in the name of some abstract ideal of brotherhood. "Our families voted liberal all their life," one woman fumed to Rieder, "and look where it got us." Meaning that the only way to defend the neighborhood was through vigilante action, near-riots and reluctantly allowing themselves to be mobilized by right-wing politicians willing to talk up violence and racism.

Rieder's no romantic. He knows self-interest is the spur to neighborhood unity. A lot of jittery Canarsie residents were ready to jump ship. "A right to screw their neighbors speaks a plain truth," he observes. "Most talk of a united Canarsie was hype or hyperbole. Economic cunning, not good neighborly feeling, was the prime factor in selling. . . . neighborliness depended on shared financial destiny." Rieder doesn't reveal a lot about the "invading" blacks but does offer a good summary of the situation from a black preacher who led the thirty-one black kids into a white Canarsie school: "[Canarsie people are] tired of running, and we're tired of being pushed around, and there you have the impasse." It's a great pity that Rieder does not study or quote the bureaucrats who were at least in part responsible for that impasse.

Canarsie's erstwhile liberalism may be dead or dying on the vine. But the energy it took to protect their financial and emotional investment taught the locals far more about grass-roots politics than any amount of paternalistic Democratic Party vote-whoring. The backlash may have awakened them, racism may run through their efforts, but the total effect is not negative—not if you love the idea of neighborhood self-help.

"Ordinary, hard-working family people learned to trade knowledge, replay scenarios, and coordinate strategy," Rieder concludes. "The crisis left in its wake combat-tested residents adept in occupying a school, mobilizing a community, defying a school board." Agitational skills were discovered and sharpened in the least likely people. "The revolt against busing reflected the demise of the apathetic electorate of the 1950s, and the rise of a feistier brand of citizen. . . . Canarsie gained more control over its development than would have been possible otherwise." At the end, Rieder suggests, there was "a net gain in the neighborhood's capacity to direct its fate, whether for democratic or tribal ends."

And that can't be all bad. □

DANCE.

MINDY ALOFF

New York City Ballet

Toward the end of the New York City Ballet's winter season at the New York State Theater, Suzanne Farrell, cynosure of the company, made her debut as the principal in the "Élégie" of *Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3*, perhaps the least spectacular, least well lit and least popular ballerina role in the Balanchine repertory. Barefoot, distanced from the audience by a scrim and without a single bravura step at her disposal, she transformed the role from a thing of potential interest into an object of continuing fascination: without apparently changing the tempo of the music, she made the movements seem faster.

Farrell's decision to dance this role at this point in her career is odd and nervy. Ballerinas, customarily, are creatures who seek the center of the light. The "Élégie" provides only the chance to be obscured. Its very subject is a man's flummoxed attempts to distinguish one woman from a multitude in a haunted ballroom. The man (N.Y.C.B. newcomer Alexandre Proia) kneels, head bent as if in thought. A line of ballerinas materialize behind him, in soft slippers and sheer gowns, their hair loose on their naked shoulders. From their

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rank, one (Farrell) steps forward, choosing or chosen; the rest of the section is concerned with the way she and the man embrace and fly and twist in the grip of some invisible force, now goading, now divisive. Periodically, the corps reassembles, the lead ballerina disappears into the flock, and the process begins again, like a recurring dream.

Since *Suite No. 3*'s 1970 premiere (about a year after Farrell's much publicized break with Balanchine, which lasted until 1975), the women's look of bedroom glamour has led some observers to disparage the ballet's "Hollywood style." Indeed, Hollywood may not be far from the images; one thinks, for instance, of the title number in the Astaire-Rogers picture *Shall We Dance?*, with its line of replica Gingers which Fred must sift through to find the real one. But Tchaikovsky isn't far away either, and Farrell's performance suggests thrilling connections between the "Élégie" and the last act of *Swan Lake*—both musically, in the soaring theme, and dramatically, in the idea that the group offers the chance of survival, while the individual partner offers the heady risk of felt life. In the "Élégie," as in all of Balanchine, images of heterosexual partnership provide the occasion for the development of more abstract relationships, between human beings and nature, living persons and memories or even symbolic forces within one mind.

Farrell's "Élégie," ably supported by Proia, who keeps up with her ardent lead and matches her line, also suggests a continuity in the entire suite. *Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3* is usually discussed as two adjacent ballets, one composed of the first three sections ("Élégie," "Valse Mélancolique" and "Scherzo"), and the other of the last section, the "Tema con Variazioni." (Balanchine originally choreographed that last section in 1947 for American Ballet Theatre, where it's still performed as *Theme and Variations*.) The "Tema" is Balanchine's monument to the classic dance style of prerevolutionary St. Petersburg, a style whose taste and understatement have barely survived Soviet theatrical reforms. The world of the "Tema" is one of pure intellection, in which every Euclidian image is blindingly clear. It is so powerfully presented and so easy to grasp that it can make the restless, hazy preceding sections seem indecisive, adrift. Farrell, by emphasizing the precision of the simple steps and the rhythmic nuance embedded in the "*Élégie*," challenges one to see that dance as an antecedent to the "Tema" and to look at the "Valse" and the "Scherzo" with cleansed eyes, drawing connections to moments in other Tchaikovsky ballets.

Rhythmic nuance, the most sophisticated aspect of dancing, is also responsible for visceral effects. The "Élégie" was originally led by Karin von Aroldingen, a ballerina with a large, handsome face, a supple back and a gift for mature, dramatic gesture. The lead woman's role bears her imprint. The choreography is a showcase for port de bras of all sorts and backbends of several depths, with little focus on the legs. It is full of climactic unfoldings, and the sudden contrasts between full-throttle attack and twisty, reined-in embraces make it lavishly demonstrative. Von Aroldingen used to emphasize the steady pressure of the movements, pulling them out with an unchanging momentum. Farrell emphasizes the varying energy that pricks them on and blunts them and swells them and thins them to vapor. By doing so, she calls attention to the elements that link the suite's different sections. Even her first gesture in the "Élégie," a softly lifted arm quickening to a pause, anticipates the first classical port de bras in the "Tema," and the urgency of her tread makes her foot seem vital, almost independently conscious—the intelligent precursor of the virtuosic blocked point that becomes so important as the suite proceeds. The development of a ballerina's foot is one of Balanchine's illuminating concerns, and Farrell, from obscurity, leads us into it anew.

Balanchine's *Gounod Symphony*, given its premiere in 1958 and sumptuously revived this winter after twenty years out of repertory, looks at first sight so mild and accessible that one might think it is easily absorbed. But with repeated viewing, its quiet complexity becomes evident. In his *Complete Stories of the Great Ballets*, Balanchine wrote of this work: "There is a kind of balance I aim for between what is heard from the orchestra and what is seen on the stage." The independent, if complementary, existence of the music and dancing here is quite different from the relationship in his 1947 *Symphonie Concertante*, where the dancing, Balanchine wrote, "follows closely the design of the music." In *Gounod* as in the other ballets of the middle and late 1950s, especially *Agon, Stars and Stripes* and *Square Dance*, there is a confidence to the choreographic phrasing, a sense of Olympian mastery, that makes the dancing a co-equal of the music. There is a surge toward equilibrium in the movement, too. Although the register or temperament of each ballet is quite different (*Agon* is eccentric and tense, *Square Dance* is frisky, *Stars and Stripes* exuberant and rash), all are concerned with balances of one kind or another, and in blatant or sly ways, all are interested in testing the magic of center stage. For this revival, Peter Martins choreographed the principals' pas de deux in the third movement, the Balanchine choreography there having been lost. Although the result is so carefully styled as to be a first-rate critical essay on Balanchine's tactics and images in this ballet, that remarkable equilibrium is absent.

Gounod is made for a cast of thirty-two: a principal couple (Merrill Ashley and Sean Lavery last season) and a corps of twenty women and ten men. The choreography deploys the dancers in dense, geometric patterns which produce the effect of tightly knitted textures, of a society whose members create public groups when viewed from a distance but seem involved in secretive engagements when viewed up close. Another reason for the packed look on stage is Robin Wagner's detailed and engaging crystal palace, which turns the ballet's original garden setting into a hothouse. It looks too assertive for a design Balanchine might have chosen, but it is colorful and subtly allusive nonetheless.

Gounod has come down to us as a quintessentially French, or Franco-American, Balanchine work, and in her indispensable recent assessment of its historical significance, Arlene Croce proffered a number of possible reasons. One of the ballet's Gallic qualities she didn't mention is the tendency of the steps to advance the dancers even as they pull the viewer's attention back, through port de bras, shoulder placement and inclination of the head. This look of entrusting oneself to the future while nostalgically, or flirtatiously, hailing the past can be found in much French art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the paintings of Watteau, for example. In *Gounod*, Balanchine uses it in the most discriminating ways, in the ballerina's zigzag walks and side-to-side

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steps, and in the corps cavaliers' double partnering duties, which send them running between two lines of women, so that they must backtrack in order to help change the pattern the corps makes onstage.

At the end of *Gounod*'s first pas de deux, the ballerina (who, though apparently dependent on her cavalier, is in fact always guiding their dance) takes a lunge and tilts her head away from the direction her body faces. In comes her cavalier to scoop her up by the waist and float her offstage. Compare this with the end of the *Stars and Stripes* pas de deux, where the ballerina (the "Liberty Bell"), accustomed to taking long balances quite without aid from her slightly mocking partner ("El Capitan"), takes an especially long balance on toe in center stage as he pretends to walk off by himself; at the last minute, he runs back to sweep her off with him. Not quite the difference between France and America but perhaps a hint of what separates *Les Enfants du Paradis* from *Notorious*. □

THEATER.

PAUL BERMAN

The Conduct of Life
Coming of Age in Soho

What is the spirit of the time? In his book *The Conduct of Life*, Emerson answered that the question is too broad. Better to ask, How shall I live? Because in examining the conduct of life we come as close as we can to discovering the spirit of our time.

I wonder if Maria Irene Fornes, she of the five Obies, meant to invoke Emerson in her own *The Conduct of Life*, which had a brief run at Theater for the New City. Her setting is Hispano-fascist, her characters more Dostoevskian than transcendental. An army officer is mad for power and might get some if he can control his vices and corrupt his fellow officers. His wife is beside herself with suspicion that he tortures prisoners and rapes the servant girl in the basement. The whole of society looks maggoty and illegitimate in her eyes. She would happily give away her wealth to those who need it. Her husband disgusts her. All is sinking into a black pit of moral despair.

This is curious to see. We don't think of the fascist classes in Latin America bothering with disgust or introspection or moral concern, only with Miami bank accounts. Of course that is stupid of us. The Hispanic fascist classes have obviously been tormenting themselves morally for many years now, since a portion of those classes has been defecting to the left-wing opposition. So they do ask, How shall I live?—naturally they do, and no doubt they ask much the way Fornes shows this officer's unhappy wife asking in *The Conduct of Life*, with agonies of soul and eventually with a gun. And what is this, by the way, if not the spirit of our time?

The play conjures a lot of tension, mostly by keeping the scenes tight and disciplined and unsettlingly short. The dialogue and staging seem almost to have been cropped too close at the top or bottom, like those paintings by Philip Pearlstein where the nude's head or leg has been cropped off the edge. Sometimes the cropping pares away everything but the musing of a single voice, and these monologues are the most effective aspect of all. The cook spends the better part of a scene describing her day. She lists her tasks, the precise timing and planning they require, the coordination, concentration and energy she must command, and though she never gets much further than breakfast, we get a vision not just of woman's work but of patience, suffering, dignity. It is a working person's answer to "How shall I live?" The actress Alba Oms brought a droll accent and manner to the part, and the effect was splendid. In another monologue the servant girl, played by Sheila Dabney, describes life in less than a shanty with her indigent grandpa, then her kidnapping and rape by the army officer, and though Dabney is a trifle old to play a homeless waif, she brought power to the scene.

The play as a whole falls short of its high points. Just as there are horse operas, space operas and oil operas, *The Conduct of Life* threatens to become a fascist opera. Crystal Field, the third actress in the cast, who played the officer's wife (and is the co-leader of Theater for the New City) was a model of resentment and anguish. The lighting by Anne Militello turned a tiny performance space into a grand villa. But the men playing the officer and the officer's buddy weren't up to these standards, and it seemed possible that Fornes's direction perhaps lacked some of the

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precision of her writing. It is an uneven play and was an uneven production—yet *The Conduct of Life* is incomparably more serious than any of the new plays on Broadway and will surely stand out in memory as a bright spot of the season. A quick revival is in order.

How shall I live? The hero in Albert Innaurato's *Coming of Age in Soho*, smartly played by John Procaccino at the Public Theater, must first decide who he is. Is he young or advancing in middle age, is he a failed schlock writer or someone to take seriously, does he inhabit the planet of the gays or the planet of the straights? He flounders among these questions, and the floundering is sometimes a little more appalling than Innaurato may have calculated. The confused writer obsesses about tying up little boys; *Little Boy Bound* was his early successful novel. He tries to seduce a 15-year-old runaway. More often his predicament is funny. The writer's wife, whom he left long ago, is a Mafia princess currently running for Congress on what appears to be a home-and-family, organized-crime ticket. An abandoned son from a long-ago affair with a German terrorist shows up demanding love. The opera in this case is buffo. One thinks of a comic chapter from Saul Bellow.

It's too bad that Innaurato can't sustain the humor or find a story sufficiently strong to carry his character. There are too many lulls in which you find yourself gazing at the backdrop, which is, incidentally, wonderful—a luminous roofscape of lower Manhattan as seen through Soho windows. But the play does have an exceptional virtue. It feels modern. The sense of displacement it evokes, of not fitting anywhere in society, its light ruefulness, like someone glancing in a mirror and saying, "Not exactly together, are you, old friend?"—this will be recognized by anyone from the hero's generation, the people now in their 30s, the generation who are probably forever doomed to dangle between hippie and bourgeois, grand hopes and straight conventions. The play isn't a masterpiece but it's true to the spirit of the times. □

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. The Youth Project is a D.C.-based, national public foundation which provides funding and technical assistance to a wide range of citizen organizations committed to social and economic justice. It has a staff of 21 people with offices in 7 states, managing approximately $4.5 million annually. Duties: program direction and policy development, fund raising ($1 million annual budget), long-range development, administrative and fiscal management. Requirements: ability to direct a complex organization and to fund raise; knowledge of social change organizations and strategies in the United States. To apply: submit resume with references, including phone numbers, to the Search Committee, The Youth Project, 1555 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Equal Opportunity Employer.

PUBLICATIONS

THE PEOPLE. Socialist bi-weekly covering major national/international developments. Since 1891. $4/one year, includes free pamphlet, "Capitalism and Unemployment." $1/four months. The People (N1), 914 Industrial Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

TECHNOCRACY-TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIAL DESIGN available for $2 from Technocracy Inc., Continental Headquarters, Savannah, OH 44874.

THE OTHER ISRAEL, newsletter of Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace. Sample copy from AICIPP, 4816 Cornell, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE U.S. ECONOMY? $8, *Socialist Party Favors, Box 8211-N, Des Moines,* IA 50306. Free catalogue.

PLAINSWOMAN publishes articles, fiction and poetry about rural women in the Plains region. Monthly. 16 pages. Subscription $10 or $15 supporter. Box 8027-NA. Grand Forks, ND 58202.

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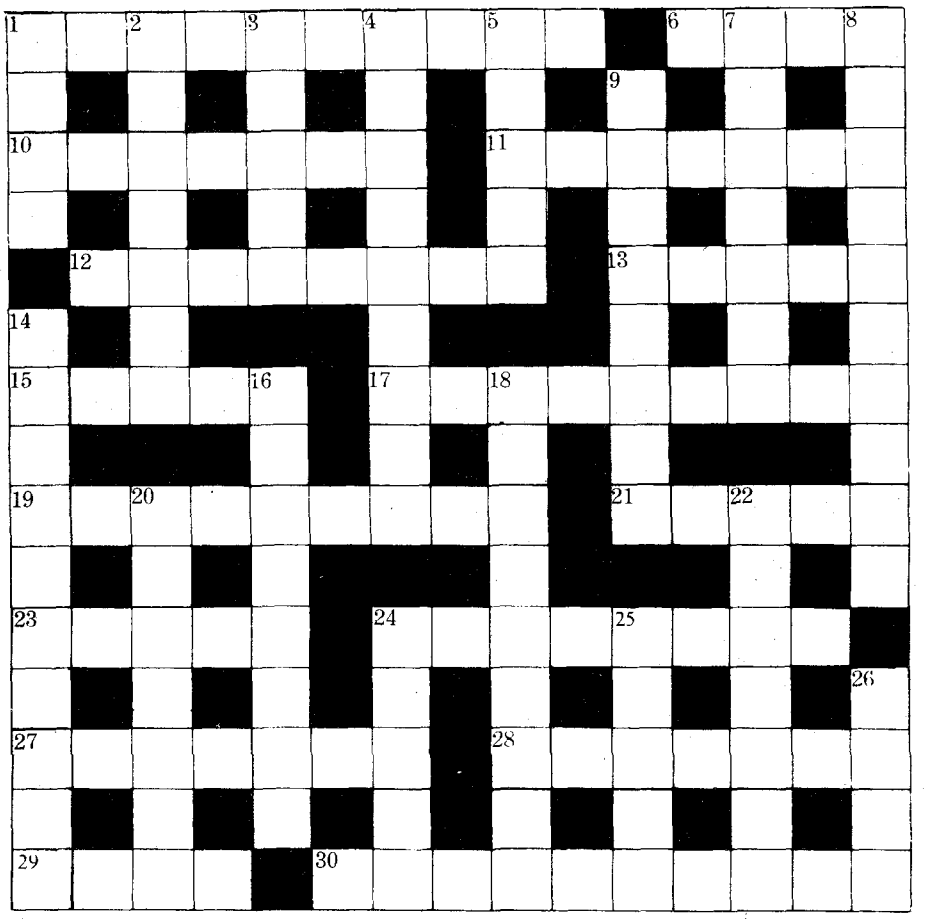

ACROSS

1 and 13 Excessive hydrophilia? Rather, hydrocephalus. (5,2,3,5)
6 and 29 Part of one's breakfast might be so finished, but not with difficulty. (4,4)
10 If you want a little hint it might be a sepia fish. (7)
11 More of a wrung-out mop than imagined, perhaps. (7)
12 Signifies this when you get to study the music. (8)
13 See 1 across
15 If you're feeling upset, you might—it sounds like a miserable one! (5)
17 People like Moses don't necessarily donate bills. (9)
19 Bunthorne said such a love wouldn't suit him. (9)
21 Root name, perhaps . . . (5)
23 . . . of the inventor, least suspected. (5)
24 Incidentally, where to find the house of Foss? (2,3,3)
27 Look! Let us find something to put the cord through! (7)
28 Arthur's mother, that is, has a supply of such as rye inside. (7)
29 See 6 across
30 They're not quite generals in the British Army, but could hold a sort of saber rigid. (10)

DOWN

1 and 26 You can race them, but the A.S.P.C.A. might not approve if you do. (8)
2 Date someone, but you can do better than this kind of food! (4,3)
3 As a rule, it sounds more like a fall! (5)
4 Billy, or just where he steps out? (9)
5 Dances around the point of desires accompanied by expectation. (5)
7 Impair the quality of this, when a half-dozen bring it up at the point mentioned above. (7)
8 Style characterized by rich outline makes the sort so queer about human beings, as they say. (10)
9 One might have been brought back after the fighting. (A peculiar bird in such a class of merchandise!) (3,5)
14 One evidently doesn't look publicly like Mr. Spade, perhaps. (7,3)
16 Reputed best sellers. (3,5)
18 What Orlando might have been doing—or Jacob. (9)
20 Have a question? (Gets around it by making things to stop the leaks.) (7)
22 The Wise Men in one quarter? Just think of it! (7)
24 One who builds on an assumption? No, lower down! (5)
25 Two such jugs, possibly. (We are two such, too.) (5)
26 See 1 down

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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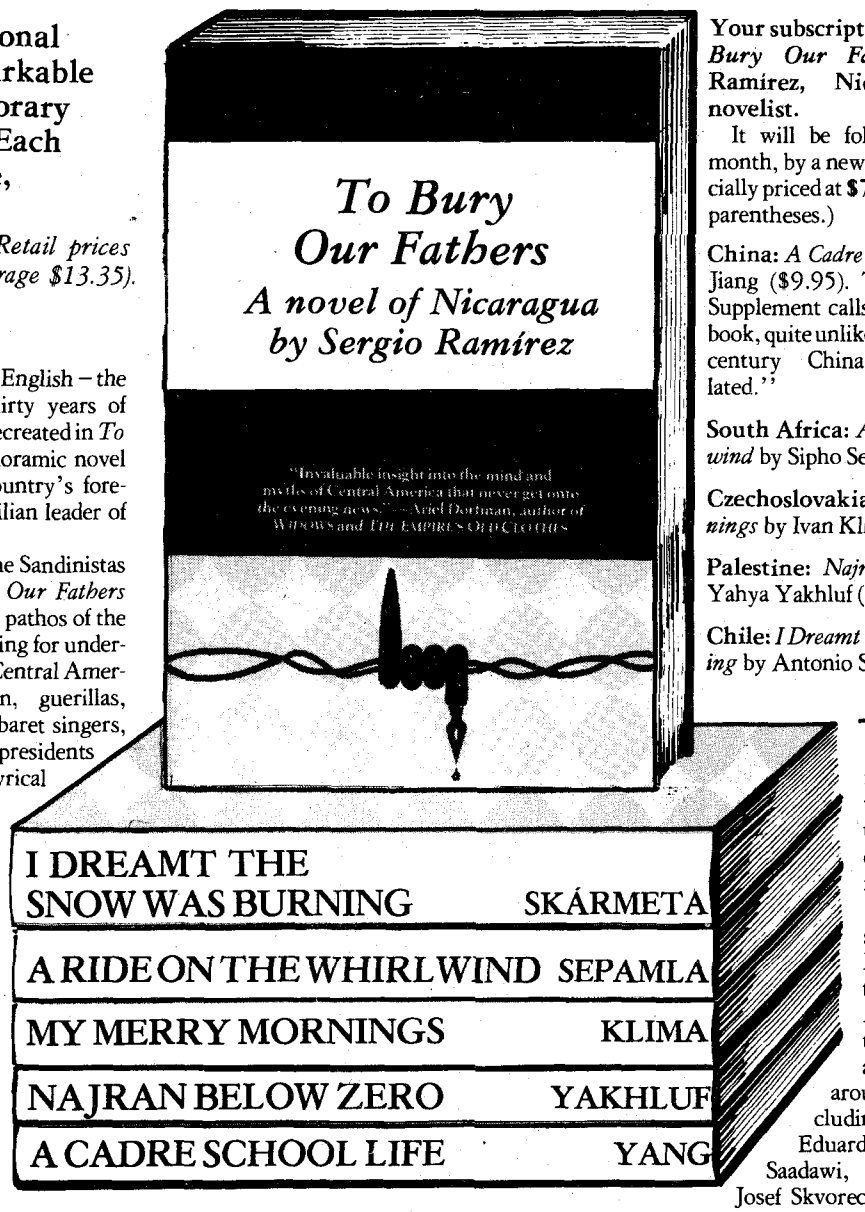
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